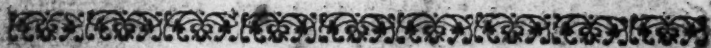


4474. f. 90

PA 2227

289



A
R E P L Y

T O

Mr. P. C's LETTER

To the AUTHOR of the

VINDICATION

O F

Mr. NATION's SERMON, &c.



2489

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY



MR. J. C. T. R.

of the University of Chicago

ALPHABETICALLY
K. M. S. 10

MR. J. C. T. R.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Charity *and* Sincerity
D E F E N D E D ;

I N A

R E P L Y

T O

Mr. P. C's LETTER

To the A U T H O R of the

V I N D I C A T I O N

O F

Mr. *Nation's* Sermon,

Lately preached at *E X O N.*

To which is added,

By J. M. K.

A second LETTER to Mr. P. C. from
Mr. *Nation*, in farther Vindication
of himself, and in Confutation of the
evasive CERTIFICATE of the Rev.
Messieurs *John Ball, John Walrond,*
and *John Lavington.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for H. W H I T R I D G E, at the Corner of
Castle Alley, in *Cornhill.* 1732. (Price 1 s)



ERRATA.

PAGE 6. Line 21. for *Exclamation* read *Exclamations*. P. 9.
l. 6. after *not*, add *allow it*. P. 10. l. 17. r. after, *Discussions*.
P. 22. l. 4. from the Bottom, for *them*, r. *themselves*. P. 33. l. 4.
for *seemd* r. *seems*. P. 39. l. 3. for *may* r. *must*. P. 51. l. 4.
from the Bottom, for *so*, r. *to*. P. 54. l. 24. for *this*, r. *that*.
P. 57. l. 29. r. *Prophets*; with *Heathens they*. P. 80. l. 3. for *in* r.
on. l. 3. from the Bottom, for *your* r. *the*. P. 89. l. 6. for *should*
r. *should not*.



REVEREND SIR,

MY late Defence of a serious, and, as I *still* think, seasonable Discourse, has, it seems, given you no small Uneasiness; too much, I find, to be counterballanc'd by the *Pleasure* my last Paragraph afforded you. 'Twas not, I own, calculated for the politer Part of Mankind, and therefore destitute of the smooth and easy Periods in modern Writings; though your Comment on my *Pedantry* and *Stiffness* of *Stile* appears to me pretty singular, as not finding in any Authors, that have yet come to my Hands, these Terms expressive of the *Upbraidings* of a Man's *Conscience*. Besides, 'tis hardly supposable, that any Paper should see the Light, which, while under the Writer's Hand, expos'd him to the Lashes of *his own* Breast. However, taking so absurd a Supposition as this is for granted, you proceed to declare your Hopes, that *by this Time* I have met with *farther* Correction. Being loath you should persevere in so groundless a Mistake, I now freely declare (on the fresh Perusal of *both*) that as nothing in your Letter to me, so nothing in mine to you has *pinch'd* me in the least, nor given me any other painful Reflections than what arose from my Concern, that a *professed Protestant Dissenter*, and *Divine*, should drop so many Things unbecoming his Character, subversive of Christian Love and Concord, sapping the Foundations of all *rational* Hope towards God, and driving the greatest Saints as well as Sinners, promiscuously, to a final Despair of infinite Mercy; and all this not in the undigested Looseness of an *extemporary* Harangue, or transiently falling in common Conversation, but coming from the Press after several *Weeks*, or
B rather

rather *Manth's* concoction. I therefore appear again as an *Advocate for Practical Christianity*. Our Neighbour will judge, whether of us "has the greater Regard for *Truth, Justice and Meekness*; whose *Picture* is most "exactly drawn, &c." Hints of this Nature are *Things of course*; *Ad populum Phalaræ*, Addresses to the Passions of the Vulgar, and may be us'd by every Adversary in all Controversies whatsoever. My Readers, indeed, will easily see that I like not a *farwing, colloquing, insinuating* Way, with an huffing and haughty Antagonist; having long since observ'd, that a *sneaking and needless* Submission furnishes such a one with fresh Matter for Scorn and Insult.

Whereas you complain of the *Charge*, which, you say, "I have very unjustly drawn up in the first Paragraph "against Mr. P. C," I shall recommend to that Gentleman's Review some of those Flowers which adorn the *first Paragraph* of his Letter to me, where (besides his invading the Province of the Searcher of Hearts) I am arraign'd for *false and groundless Assertions, violent Invectives, most uncharitable Insinuations, scattering Fire-brands, Arrows and Death*, as if I had been in sport, without any seeming Regard to *Decency or Charity*, for managing *Debates about Religion in a ludicrous and outrageous Way*; and such as force themselves into the other parts of it, viz. My Design to cast *Dirt on my Brethren^a*; To cavil and calumniate rather than find out *Truth^b*; My treating the great *Doctrines of the Gospel, and Principles of Faith with Levity^c*; My chiming in exactly with *Socinus, vilifying Faith, and magnifying Obedience, encouraging Infidelity, betraying the Christian Religion, and delivering up the Doctrines of it into the Enemies Hand^d*; My very loose *Divinity, which seems rather to be taken from the Alcoran or the Leviathan than the Bible^e*. I am gravely ask'd, whether *The Deists could desire any Thing that's better calculated to give a spread to their Infidelity^f*. 'Tis insinuated, That I make a *Jest, or nothing of the Faith of Christians*; that I am led by *Prejudice, Passion, and Party Interest*; and that my *Writing, if I think as I write, makes me seem to be Sceptick enough to be a Papist at Rome, a Mahometan at Constantinople, and an*

^a Page 2. ^b p. 4. ^c *ibid.* ^d p. 5. ^e p. 30. ^f p. 31.

Heathen in China or Japan^a. I am told, *That I rave with such an unaccountable Fury as never ('tis believ'd) any Minister or Christian did before^b. I am charg'd with a lavish and outrageous Rudeness of Language^c; with giving way to childish Wrath^d; with licking up Mr. Peirce's envenom'd Spittle in his Western Inquisition; bespattering my Brethren, blackening their Character, and attempting to sink their Reputation^e; If Mr. P. C's. Temper will allow him to peruse these Accusations with any Calmness, he may possibly be convinc'd that his own masterly Hand hath aim'd at more than a bare Retaliation.*

If my Way of writing has forfeited all Claim to a particular Reply, as you say^f, you are the more excusable for saying so little to the Purpose against what I had urg'd. But then (it may be ask'd with Submission) how came you to take so much Pains in animadverting on some Things, whilst you have wholly omitted others wherein Mr. N's. and my Information were concern'd, and no less your own Credit and Reputation?

Such a Sermon, whose Purport you acknowledge to be the recommending an holy Life, I still charge you with an Endeavour to disgrace, and with blaming the Preacher for insisting on practical Christianity, when his Text naturally led him thereunto. That *he fell under general Dislike*, as you suggest, does not yet appear; though you assert it, as if 'twere demonstrably true; but 'tis exceeding odd (whatever you may think to the contrary) to assign Reasons for, and draw Inferences from any Thing that was never yet prov'd to be Matter of fact, especially when the Reasons and Inferences themselves are equally false. The Discourse intiruled, *Practical Christianity the true Orthodoxy*; or, *a wicked Life the worst Heresy*, has been approv'd (to my certain knowledge) by divers judicious Divines in City and Country, and not a few private Christians, who are not of a Discernment nice enough to find out the black and hellish Design of the Author, which (according to your Representation^g) was, "To slur and depreß the Christian Faith and Doctrinal Truths, and to run out into slanting Investives and Innuendo's against such as had been the Defenders and Abettors of the received Faith among us; as if they,

^a Page 34. ^b p. 38. ^c *ibid.* ^d p. 52. ^e p. 54. ^f p. 2. ^g *ibid.*

" like so many blind and furious Zealots, had sunk the
 " Interest of Religion, and set the Church on Fire." The
 true Reason therefore, why Mr. N. did *not* fall under a
 general Dislike, was because he prosecuted the Purport of
 his Text, and instead of stigmatizing with opprobrious
 Name such as differ'd from him, or raising the Resent-
 ments of Christians one against another, pressed *all* to a
 Conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ. His Text
 led him to inveigh against such Methods as had been found
 diametrically opposite to practical Godliness, and to dis-
 grace as much as possible every Thing, that under the
 specious Pretext of promoting the Christian Faith, had a
 direct Tendency to destroy it. As to that unrighteous
 Charge (the nauseous Repetitions of which in your first
 Letter to him made me e'en sick, and you are resolv'd in
 this to my self to surfeit me again with) *viz.* " his speaking
 " against the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, and *some other Truths*,
 " upon which great stress is laid in the Gospel ; " there's
 not one *Iota* in the whole Sermon to support it ; nor " is
 " there one black or odious Character fix'd on *any one* for
 " his Adherence to *them*." So that what I now transcribe
 from p. 3. is mere Calumny, " I think he should have
 " said nothing against them, or those who believe them
 " on that Account. This, I may be allow'd to think,
 " was very foreign from his Text, and had at least the
 " Appearance of too strong an Inclination to act as a Party
 " concern'd, to serve and support a Cause that he *now* dis-
 " owns." Tho' 'twas foreign from his Text to enter into the
 Detail of the several Controversies relating to the *Trinity*, he
 yet might *apply*, and *appositely* enough (as a Peace-maker)
 persuade all to put the softest and most charitable Inter-
 pretations on one anothers disagreeing Sentiments, and
 without striking one Stroke on *either* side, labour to re-
 concile angry Combatants, by setting before them the
chief Design of the Gospel, which is to promote an holy
 Life ; and which he thought, as I do, would best be an-
 swer'd by a Forbearance of debating such Things as wise
 and good Men may, and have, and still do differ in their
 Speculations about. The Cause of Charity is not *now*,
 and, I hope, *never* will be disown'd by Mr. N. for that
 will be to disown a *considerable Part* of Christianity. But
 you seem, Sir, very willing to make your Readers be-
 lieve, that your elaborate Letter to him has compell'd
 him to a formal Retraction of something which he own'd
 before :

before ; A most false Insinuation. You add, *ibid*, " 'Tis abundantly evident, that these were the Apprehensions of those who are chiefly interested in that Cause." But can Mr. N. prevent the Apprehensions of others, any more than he can Mr. P. C's. ? His Sermon has been for some Time abroad in the World, and will speak for it self ; so that your reiterated Accusations serve to expose the licentious Boldness and Effrontery of the Accuser.

The *present Vindicator* is not ashamed to confess himself the Preacher of one of those Sermons, where you suggest so much *Fire was scatter'd*^a ; as not feeling any more Reproaches of Conscience for *that*, than he does for his Defense of the *other*, though he never thought himself the *greatest Patron*, much less the *sole Ingrosser* of Charity, as you invidiously represent him. The *supposed* Fire scatter'd might be only some Dust of Mr. P. C's. or his angry Brethrens raising ; however, if there were *real* Flames, they might be kindled from another Quarter ; nor is it uncommon for those, who contribute their best Endeavours, to extinguish Flames rais'd and increas'd by others, to be impeach'd for *Incendiaries* themselves. Will you give me Leave, Sir, to recite a short Story, as I find it in Mr. *Baxter's* Answer to Dr. *Tully's* angry Letter^b.

" When the *Moors* were sentenced to ruin in *Spain*,
 " one of the Disciples of *Valdesso* (a Scholar) fell into
 " the Displeasure of the Bishop of *Toledo*: A Neighbour
 " Doctor, knowing that the Bishop's Favour might bestead
 " him,——(whether accidentally or contrivedly, I know
 " not) hit upon this happy Course. The Scholar and he
 " being together in a solemn Convention, the Scholar was
 " taking Tobacco, and the Doctor seeing the Smoke, threw
 " first a Glass of Beer in his Face, and cried Fire, Fire :
 " The Scholar wiped his Face, and went on ; the Doctor
 " next threw an *Ink-bottle* in his Face, crying still *Fire*,
 " *Fire*. The Scholar being thus black'd, perceived that
 " he was like to be taken for a *Moor*, and ruined, and he
 " went out and carefully wash'd his Face : The Doctor
 " charged him openly for affronting him (yea, and inju-
 " riously calumniating him) by the Fact : For, saith he,
 " there was necessary Cause for what I did. There
 " is no Smoke without some Fire : That which fired you
 " might next have fired the House, and that the next

^a Page 2.

^b P. 73, 74.

" House,

" House, and so have burnt down all the City ; and your
 " Action intimateth as if I had done causelessly what I did,
 " and done you wrong. The Scholar answer'd him : I
 " knew not, Sir, that it was unlawful to wash me, but I will
 " take no more Tobacco, that I may no more offend you :
 " But if in this frosty Weather the *thickness* of my *Breath*
 " should be called *Smoke*, may I not wash my Face, if
 " you again cast your Ink upon it ? No, saith the Doctor,
 " it is not you, nor any private Man, that must be Judge,
 " whether you are on Fire or not, in a publick Danger :
 " Must the City be hazarded, if you say that it is not Fire ?
 " The Scholar asketh, May I not refer the Case to the
 " Standers-by, and wash my Face, if they say it was no
 " Fire ? No, saith the Doctor, that is but to call in your
 " Associates to your help, and to add *Rebellion* and *Schism*
 " to your Disobedience : I perceive what Principles you
 " are of. Why then, saith the Scholar, if I must needs be
 " a *Moor*, my Face and I are at your Mercy."

Both Learned and Unlearned are, by this Time, Judges
 whether there be a sufficient Foundation for those loud and
 tragical Exclamation of yours against *that* Discourse, which
 has already seen the Light. And *that*, which has *yet* had
 no other Publication than from the Pulpit, as it *then* had
 the Approbation of a considerable Number of Ministers,
 and others who heard it, so (what is vastly superior) has
 still the pleasing Testimony of *his own* Breast who deli-
 ver'd it. Wherefore the Censures of a nameless uncertain
 Author, as to want of *Discretion*, and *very odd Methods*
of promoting holy Living, will be treated with the Con-
 tempt they deserve. As neither of us consulted him be-
 fore-hand, (not knowing, indeed, where to find him) so
 could we have done it, and submitted entirely to his ma-
 gisterial Dictates in the Composition of our Discourses, or
 laid them at the Feet of such a *Gamaliel*, when they were
 finished, to be bless'd with an *Index expurgatorius*, they
 might *then*, perchance, have appear'd as lame and imper-
 fect in the Eyes of many, *equally wise, and learned, and*
pious with himself, as *now* they do in *his own*.

You say ^a, " God forbid, that any should be
 " blamed when they have nothing else in view but the
 " advancing Holiness and Obedience." Mr. N. in the
 Preface to his Sermon, declares, that 'twas compos'd with

such a Design, and such a Declaration ought to be regarded beyond any remote Innuendo's, and far-fetch'd Constructions to the contrary. A small Share of Wit, mingled with a great deal of Wrath, will enable a Person to torture the most *plain* Expressions, and say something in Opposition to the most *innocent* Ones ; and, when he has labour'd to puzzle common sense, and hunted for *dangerous* and *heretical Meanings* under the clearest and most obvious Sentences, he may, if he please, be such a *Suffenus*, as to admire himself for " setting *Things* in a *strong* " and *just Light*, and making *their true Tendency* evident to all^a." But this Method that may be equally used to disparage the *best*, as well as the *worst* Things that were ever preach'd or written, cannot, (I humbly imagine) be deem'd a very honourable one. Mr. N. had attempted to beat off Persons from a vain Dependence on their supposed Orthodoxy, without a regular Life, (endeavouring to convince them, that a sober, righteous, and godly Conversation, would be the most *certain*, and indeed *only* Evidence of their soundness in the Faith.) He had faithfully admonish'd his Brethren to warn their respective Congregations of such a fatal Mistake, than which I can't easily conceive any thing more seasonable, more important, more necessary in any Age than in ours, wherein we find so great a Diversity of Opinions, and some of the most vile and dissolute in their Morals, supporting themselves with their *sound Faith*, and triumphing over their more sober and conscientious Neighbours on this Account. When Niggards, Drunkards, Oppressors, Whoremongers, Sodomites, &c. can insult others for wanting that *Purity* of the Faith, which they think themselves Possessors of: 'Tis highly requisite to inform the World, that trusting to what some call a *good Faith*, or *good Principles*, is, *at least*, as *bad* as trusting to *good Works*. A Man may well be supposed to want something to carp at, who can accuse another of a most groundless and unjust Reproach, or a base and wicked Charge on this Head. Had you, Sir, spent all your Days in a Wilderness, or were your Letters to Mr. N. and me to be perused only by *Children*, or *Idots*, or *Hermits*, the Justification of your severe Strictures, as to this Particular, would not astonish me so much as now it does, when the Groans of

Parents over debauch'd Youth, the Tears of compassionate Relatives, the Distractions in Families, the scandalous Law-suits arising from Pride, Luxury, Covetousness among Persons of all Denominations and Professions, &c. are so sad and effectual a Confutation of your Censure.

But should there be found, in a popular Sermon, some unguarded Expressions, whilst they were honestly design'd to promote Christian Love and Piety, I can't see of what Service it would be to practical Religion to expose them. I say not this, because what I undertook the Defense of, appears *now* to me less deserving it, than it did at first: Nay, that Passage, which seem'd most obnoxious, and is therefore, with great Smartness, animadverted on by you, is, I think, capable of a Vindication^a: "I can much better make Allowances for Heathens guilty of this Idolatry, than I can for Persons under the Old Testament having so many Wives and Concubines, or half Wives, as they had;" when I consider what accursed Freedoms the Libertines of this Age have taken from the Polygamy of the Ancients, and how little Danger there is on the other Side of falling into the gross Idolatry of the Heathens. That modest and charitable Paragraph of his^b, for which you are so angry, discovers a truly Christian Temper: Nor have your pompous Citations (so I call'd them in my written Copy, not *Oration's*) yet prevail'd on me to think the contrary.

I believe, Sir, as well as you, that some Truths and Duties are of greater Importance than others; in Proportion to the Clearness of their Revelation, their Influence on the Peace and Welfare of civil or religious Societies, the solid Pleasure and Satisfaction flowing from a Submission to them, &c. Ritual Institutions, that were in the Fulness of Time to be abolished, were not of equal Importance with such as are of perpetual Obligation. Loving God and our Neighbour must, doubtless, be prefer'd to all Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices. However, I can't help believing but the least Truth or Duty (though I like not to call any *little* which appear to my self to bear the Stamp of divine Authority) must be of *great Importance*. The only Difference betwixt you and me here (which, I confess, is a very material one) seems to be this: I claim a Liberty to understand my Bible for my self, and to look upon

^a Page 8, 9. of the Sermon.

^b p. 9.

every Truth and Duty that I can find there with mine own Eyes, to be of Importance to *me* in the Conduct of my Life, but not to *my Neighbour*; unless he has the same Perception of them also; whereas you would have the Freedom of believing for *your self* and *others* too, or of reproaching them with *Heresy* if they do not.

You speak of it as a *melancholy Case*, that I should call the Opinions of Men *Speculations, Subtilties, Peculiarities; and distinguishing Schemes*; if you can help me to fitter Terms for the Notions of weak, frail, dark, imperfect Mortals, I'll use them. 'Tis, I think, "more melancholy and more reproachful to *all Revelation*, that *fallible Worms* cannot, or will not, be content with their Brethrens and Fellow Christians Profession of their Faith in the infallible Records, but must impose their own *Glosses and Comments* on such as stand upon the same Foundation with themselves." I prize the Labours, I reverence the Learning of Criticks, and own my self indebted to the Light they have given, and daily give me, in the Knowledge of the holy Scriptures; nay, I'll thankfully acknowledge any Assistance of this sort; that I can receive from the meanest Christian. But should the greatest uninspired Men, being met in an *Oecumenical Assembly*, pretend to impose on me the Profession of my Faith in any Article, or (which comes to the same) the Explication of any Article, without an antecedent Conviction of its Truth, I might very righteously shake off the Dust of my Feet against them. The insisting on my Subscription to, or Declaration of any Thing, as contained in the Gospel, which I my self can't see there (how plainly soever it appears to the Imposers) is, indeed, palming *another Gospel* upon me; and, were it possible for an Angel from Heaven to do this, St. *Paul* shews us in what manner he must be treated, *Gal. i. 8, 9*. Your Complaints, that "I set all Doctrines on the Level, and speak no more favourably of Truth than of Error, that I discover the utmost Tenderness and Respect to the Patrons of what I own to be Error, and lash the Advocates for Truth with the utmost Severity," are (to say the best of them) mere TATTLE. What is *Truth*? and what is *Error*? If Truth in Doctrines or Principles must be an *entire* Conformity to the *Ideas* in the *divine* Mind, what human Being is there now on Earth who can possibly lay claim unto it? If Error be a Deviation from these *Ideas*, what Child of *Adam* can

at present be free from it? Will you say, there's a plain Revelation of the *divine Ideas*, or the *divine Will*, in the Bible, so that all important Truths may easily and certainly be known? This I readily confess, if, by important Truths, you mean only such as are necessary to be known, by him, who can read the Scriptures, in order to Salvation; (for, in a proper Sense, every Truth which I can discover to be *divine*, I discover the very same Moment to be *important*.) All needful Truths a sincere and humble Inquirer into his Master's Will, may expect an Understanding of, though his Faith be not settled in any particular Scheme, as to the Doctrine of the *Trinity*; I mean, any Scheme of *human* Invention; and all that I have yet seen (or expect to see) deserve *no higher* Character. *Aristotle* and his Commentators, some whereof were *Pagans*, some *Turks*, some *Jews*, some *Papists*, &c. have assisted the Zealots of different Persuasions in their Searches after Discussions and Determinations of the most mysterious Points of Faith, and obliged them, *by Turns*, to give and receive solemn *Anathema's* from one another. You seem, indeed^a, to profess your dislike of any *scholastick Subtleties*, or any particular *Theories* about the *Trinity*: But let me tell you, Sir, 'tis impossible to enter the Field with any prospect of Success without such Furniture. Your Mouth will immediately be stopt, if you can have Recourse to nothing but plain Scripture, and are allow'd no Help from the Definitions, Distinctions, Criticisms, &c. of the Learned; and so, indeed, will every Body's besides, who has to do with any Adversary, that believes the Bible to be both a *sufficient* and the *only* Rule of Faith and Manners. I consider not now the various Readings, nor that disputed Text, 1 *John* v. 7. concerning which learned Men of the same, as well as different Denominations, have disagreed. Let Christians once be brought to this, even to let one another read this *common* Rule for themselves, and understand it in the best Manner they are able; and *Polemical Theology* will soon be at an End. But here's the perpetual Source of religious Content: You say, you believe the Bible; *this has been the Language of Hereticks in all Ages*: But pray, what Sense do you put on such or such a Text? Do you expound it according to my Mind, or not? Or are you so ignorant, so obstinate, or impudent, as to call in Que-

sion my Scholarship, my Penetration, Diligence, or Sincerity? In Words to this Effect do Bigots daily address their Antagonists; and 'tis with no little Concern I observe Scripture Language profaned, and too many, in a Protestant Nation, imposed upon by the POPULAR CANT of *Soundness in the Faith, and the fundamental Truths of the Gospel*; when no more or less is understood hereby than a certain Attachment to the Notions, or rather sometimes the Whimsies and delirious Imaginations of conceited Worms, who are of *Yesterday*, and may be said comparatively to know nothing. That you may not mistake me, Sir, here; I design not what I now say, as a Stricture on some one particular Set of Men; no, I am too sensible human Nature will act like it self amongst all sorts. I see nothing in any Principles of Religion, whether imbib'd in Childhood, or received afterwards, that consider'd abstractly from an inward Sense of Piety, and the Influences of the divine Spirit, will hinder vain, proud, self-conceited Mortals from acting their Parts. But such are certainly a Scandal to Christianity, and to the Protestant Name, and, whilst they honour their respective Particularities with such Appellations, as only belong to the inspired Oracles, do justly entitle themselves to the Character of *vain-glorious Enthusiasts*.

But to return to your self. Let me suppose an *Arian* standing before you, and submitting himself to your Examination: You ask him, whether he believes Christ to be God? He answers in the Affirmative. You again enquire, what kind of God he supposes him to be? He replies, such a God as his Bible makes him. This you'll complain is *collusive Language*; but he may tell you, 'tis the fittest for him, as a *Protestant*, to give, and the fittest for you (who han't yet openly renounced the Protestant Faith) to receive. Well, however, you request him to satisfy you, whether he believes the Son to be truly and properly God? To this he saith, yes; consistently enough with *his own* Notion of God, though not perhaps with *yours*. But you farther ask, Does he believe him to be one with the Father? To this he likewise replies in the Affirmative. You then press him with another Question, How is he one with the Father? Is he of the *same Essence* with the Father? To this the *Arian* answers, by asking you in his Turn a Question, *viz.* What you mean by Essence? or whether the sacred Scriptures have answer'd what you ask,

either in the *Affirmative* or *Negative*? If they have not, he rightly enough thinks that he may be excused. If you refuse to inform him what you understand by the Term [*Essence*,] he has just Reason to complain that you expect his Assent to a certain Proposition in *your Sense*, when you won't let him know what *your Sense* of it is; and so the Debate ends. But if you comply with his Desire, and explain your Notion of the Term, you are unavoidably drawn into metaphysical Points.

'Tis therefore excessively trifling to say, as you do^a, "What-
 " ever you would insinuate to the World, you can't but know,
 " that such Speculations and Subtilties were never insisted
 " on in these Parts: But, in plain Terms, the Question
 " hath always been, Whether Persons believe in Christ
 " and the Holy Spirit, as truly and properly God, and
 " one God with the Father?" Suppose this Question be
 answer'd in the Affirmative, by one who believes the Holy
 Spirit, as well as Christ, to be a *divine Person*, or a *God*,
 in any Sense, though, to discharge himself from Equivoca-
 tion, he may tell you that he means an Oneness in Agree-
 ment; that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are *one God*,
 as *Peter, James, and John*, are *one Man*. If this satis-
 fies you not, as, doubtless, it won't, the Terms *Person*,
Nature, Essence, Substance, &c. necessarily come under
 Consideration. As to the following Queries, Whether
they pay divine Worship, &c. the *Arian* may give such
 Answers, as will of Course put a Stop to the Contest, or
 certainly involve you in metaphysical Wranglings.

You say^b, You are really astonish'd that any Man of
Sense should so much as seem to question, whether Truth
 must not be on one side or other, when the Proposition on
 the one side is, that Christ is the true God; and, on the
 other, that he is not. If, by the true God, you mean the
 Son, exclusive of the Father and Holy Ghost, you'll find
 not only *Arians*, but all others, opposing such an Affir-
 mation; or if you understand the Term *Christ*, as inclusive
 of the other two, you'll scarce find any admitting it; this
 Name being never used to express the *sacred Three*: But
 if you only mean that he is *truly God*, as you seem to ex-
 plain your self^c, you'll find the *Arians* concurring with
 you. But then when you come to explain your selves on both
 sides, and urge divers Texts, with their several Explica-

^a Page 6, 7.^b p. 7.^c p. 9.

tions, with Corollaries and Deductions from them; each producing what he thinks requisite for the establishing of his different Scheme, here sometimes *you* may be in the right, and sometimes the *Arian* may be so. The Descants and Remarks of one may be more just on *this* Text, the Hints of the other on *that* Text. You may pinch the *Arian* this Minute, he may pinch you the next. Nay, I reckon it far from impossible, that you may frequently be *both* in the *wrong*; that neither you nor he may be perfectly appriz'd of the Scope, Dependence, Connexion, &c. of many an obscure Passage in sacred Writ.

For my part, I don't think any Person breathing can properly deserve the Epithet [*Orthodox*] to be given him in the full Import of the Word; as to his Sentiments about the *Trinity*, or *any Thing else*. How dim and languid at best, are the Conceptions of the clearest Heads, and strongest Brains, compar'd with that consummate Knowledge which the Almighty possesses? I can therefore, without any Breach of Charity, conclude *Tritheists*, *Sabellians*, *Arians*, nominal and real *Trinitarians* all mistaken, as finding something or other in every Scheme that embarrasses it, and seems to hang as a Millstone about its Neck. The best Advice then I can give my self or others, is either wholly to keep to Scripture Language, suspending our Thoughts about so mysterious Points, any farther than practical Godliness is necessarily concern'd in them, or else to admit of that which has, or seems to have the fewest Difficulties, whilst we express the greatest Charity (which a regular and exemplary Conversation *in them* demands from us) towards our dissenting Brethren.

But, Sir, if you resolve to persist in censuring all that can't see Things in the same Light with your self, and pronounce them *unsound in the Faith*, because not falling into the same Train of Thoughts with you; if for this they must be abandon'd, deny'd Christian Communion, and treated as *Heathens* and *Publicans*, you may perhaps tempt them to accost you with that *sneering Exclamation* that seems to sit so heavy on your Stomach, LEARNED (or rather INFALLIBLE) SOUL. A *Tritheist*, *Sabellian*, *Arian*, &c. may ask you, whether a Person having laid himself open to Conviction, and sincerely examin'd his Bible, comparing Texts with Texts, and Scheme with Scheme, and at last finding it necessary to leave the Notions of the great Mr. P. C. must be blam'd for "suffering
"him-

himself to be cheated or wheedled out of his Faith?" Whether Soundness in the Faith of the Gospel, and an entire Submission to Mr. P. C's. Speculations are always convertible? i. e. Whether he is certainly sound in the Faith, that believes as Mr. P. C. does? And such a one as *does not, cannot* believe exactly what *he* does; for that reason *does not, cannot* be found in the Faith? Or, Whether one who dares to banter and expose, and ridicule Mr. P. C's. assuming such dogmatical Airs must therefore be censur'd for bantering, exposing or ridiculing the *Faith*? Will you say, that every Conclusion flowing from Premises contain'd in the Scriptures must be received? They will own it, but won't allow you to find *such* Premises, or draw *such* Conclusions for *them* (whatever you may do for *your self*) which they themselves can't see.

You suppose it "much less excusable than a Blunder, to say, that 'tis not a Matter of the last Concern, let the *Truth lie on which side it will.*" But as bad, Sir, as you take this Saying of mine to be; if by the *Truth* you mean an exact Conformity to the *divine Idea*, or (in more familiar Words) a thinking exactly as the great God thinks, I must tell you, that making Truth a Matter of the last Concern, is robbing your self, and all other *fallible* Beings, of any comfortable Prospect with reference to another World. Dare you venture your everlasting Concerns on such a Bottom as your *supposed Orthodoxy* in the Doctrine of the *Trinity*? Are you so rash and fool-hardy, as to place your Hopes of eternal Blessedness on your *logical* Head; the accuracy and justness of your Reasonings, and the certain Agreement of your *Notions* of Things with the *Things themselves*? To be *sincere*, indeed, in our *Searches* after the Truth, and our *Reception* of it when we think we have found it, is of the *last Concern*, and so far we are safe.

You ask^a, "What can be of the last Concern to Christians, if not to be satisfied, Whether the Object of their *Faith, Love, Hope* and *Trust*, be God or not?" The *Arians* will own it is. They'll also acknowledge, 'tis "their last Concern to believe that the God whom we Christians own and worship, is such a Being as the Scriptures represent him." But, Sir, may not the *Arians* stile the God we believe in a *fictitious* Deity, a God

of our own *Fancy* and *Formation*, with as great Civility, as you use towards them? That the Son is God as well as the Father, according to their Notion of the *Term*, the *Arians* likewise believe; and that it is of the *last Concern* not to deny him any of those glorious Perfections which they find ascribed to him. Nor did I ever hear of one amongst them who did not believe him to be the *true Messiah*, though they don't think themselves under a Necessity to understand the *true God*, 1 John v. 20. or the *great God*, Tit. ii. 14. of this *Messiah*. Nor does it follow, if they should be mistaken in their Descants on these Texts, that they therefore reject that *glorious Person* that should come; that they receive him not as *Christ*, nor his Religion as the *true Religion*.

You ask, "Whether it be not a Matter of the *last Concern*, that we love our Saviour with all our Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength?" This you likewise take Notice of in your first Letter to Mr. N.^a and both there and here charge Idolatry on such as thus profess to love him, who yet think him not altogether equal with the Father. But, Sir, what are, and must be the proper Motives and Inducements to Love? As the glorious Excellencies resident in any Being render him an Object of *Admiration*; so these exerted and imploy'd for the Good of others render him an Object of *Love*. Infinite Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, &c. separate from Goodness, will make the great *Jehovah* terrible instead of amiable; nay, Divine Goodness it self will not appear lovely to me, as far as I despair of any Share or Interest in it. To love one who I am persuaded hates me with an *irreconcilable* Hatred, and will consequently discover his Power in making me *unspeakably and everlastingly miserable*, is surely impossible: Nay, the greater he is the more dreadful *Ideas* must I have of him. But if a Mediator appears to pacify this incensed Being, who is every way qualified for the Work he undertakes, and has perfectly accomplish'd it; who has snatch'd me from the Hands of provoked Justice, render'd the offended God propitious to me, and by his amazing Passion purchased for me unconceivable Felicity instead of that endless Woe and Misery, which had otherwise been my certain Lot: Can I forbear to love such a one with all my Heart, &c? The Dignity of his

Person, the Greatness of his Condescension, the Intensity of his Pains, &c. are Topicks, indeed, which I should think upon to raise my Love, and make it, if possible, more fervent towards him every Day ; but 'tis the *successful* Performance of his Mediation that necessarily intitles him to my supreme Affections ; and the more rational Assurance I have of an Interest in his Crucifixion and Intercession, the more shall I love him. The Father who sent the Son must be loved also in the most perfect Manner we are capable of, whose everlasting Love engaged him to find out so glorious a Method for the Salvation of *Apo-states* : So that we are not to conceive of Father and Son as two Rivals, but as *both* laying the most just Claim to the superlative Esteem of the Children of Men. Fallen Angels cannot love either Father or Son. Not all the distinguishing Perfections of the *Godhead* can render it desirable unto Devils. None but such as can reflect on these Perfections, as some way or other exercised for their Benefit or Comfort, can love *them*, or *him* who possesses them. Now *Arians*, whilst they conceive as great Hopes as *Trinitarians*, of their Interest in the Merits of Christ ; who are willing to believe he has done as much for them, as for their Brethren who differ in some Things from them, think they ought to love him as much as any others do. If from their Conformity to the great Redeemer's Laws, and keeping his Commandments, they can prove their Right unto the Tree of Life, and their future Admission through the Gates into the celestial City prepared for them, they justly imagine, that they *may*, that they *must* express as great a Degree of Love to him that has procur'd the same Crown of Glory for themselves (however unworthy of it) as for their Neighbours.

But, say you, " may we venture thus to love our Saviour *our without flat and gross Idolatry?*" This Charge (which, you suggest, hath, and will lie as a dead Weight upon *their* darling Notion, who fall not into *your Scheme*) you seem exceeding fond of ; 'tis what takes up no small Part of your first Letter, and frequently recurs in your second, though apparently inconsistent with those Professions of Charity that you sometimes make. You say^a, you " ever inclin'd to what is most charitable as to Men's eternal State." That^b " 'tis not your Province, nor hath

^a Page 43. ^b p. 47.

" it ever been your Practice to *condemn* those, who yet
 " you think are grossly mistaken ; that ^a " you still reserve
 " to the great Judge of the World his *sovereign Preroga-*
 " *tive*, of making what Allowances he, in his infinite Wis-
 " dom, thinks fit, at the last Day, to those who believe
 " contrary to what his Word directs." Of what *Use* or
Force can these dry Salvo's be, when you so peremptorily
 charge them with *Idolatry*, and seem so angry at every
 soft or charitable Word that may be dropt in their Favour ?
 When you likewise represent it to be (as indeed it is) a very
 heinous Sin : You say ^b " 'tis condemn'd with the utmost
 " *Severity* throughout the *Bible*, and represented as one of
 " those execrable Works of the Devil that Christ came to de-
 " stroy. ^c If Christ be not God in the strictest Sense,
 " all religious Worship ought not only to be *terminated*
 " in, but confin'd to the Father." So that you as *roundly*
 condemn all you call or think *Arians*, as you say, Mr. N.
roundly excuses them. To that Question then of yours ^d,
 " Hath it been ever a Method with us to curse and damn
 " them ? " I must answer, Yes ; it has been *your own*
 Method in both your Letters : I don't mean, that you
wish them curs'd and damn'd, but you pronounce them all
 to a Man to be in a curs'd and damnable State : You
 know as well as I, that *Idolaters shall not inherit the*
Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. That *all such shall*
have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire
and Brimstone, which is the second Death ; that they
are without the Gate that leads into the City, Rev. xxi. 8.
 Chap. xxii. 15. I acknowledge your Curses and damna-
 tory Sentences against them, will never expose them to
 divine Vengeance, or seclude them from future Happiness,
 if nothing else hinders, any more than the Church of
Rome's cursing Hereticks with Bell, Book and Candle.
 But I would soberly demand of you, whether it be agree-
 able to the Principles and Spirit of Christianity, to treat
 your Fellow-Servants in such a Manner, who, for any
 Thing you *do*, or *can* know to the contrary, may be as
 much in their Master's Favour as your self, and shine at
 last as gloriously in their Father's Kingdom ? I will sup-
 pose, a serious, watchful, circumspect Christian, to be-
 lieve the Subordination of the Son [in his highest Capa-

^a Page 11. ^b p. 40. of your first Letter. ^c p. 45. ^d p. 24. of
 your Letter to me.

city] to the Father, and that he believes thus from what he finds in his Bible. When our Saviour asserteth, *My Father is greater than I*, John xiv. 28. *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all*, John x. 29. *The Son can do nothing of himself*, John v. 19. *But of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no, not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*, Mark xiii. 32. When he meets with the Father's *sending the Son*; *committing all Judgment to him*, John v. 22. *Giving him all Power*, &c. Such a one may be prevail'd with, not only to doubt of, but to deny the *Son's Equality with the Father*, notwithstanding that Text, *Phil. ii. 6.* which he thinks capable of another Sense than what you give it. The Question is not, whether he is mistaken, or otherwise, but whether, having with a sincere and unprejudic'd Mind examin'd the holy Scriptures, yet forced to differ from Mr. P. C. Mr. P. C. has, notwithstanding, Authority to declare him an *Idolater*. I will likewise suppose such a one at last on his Death-bed, asserting what is call'd the *Arian Faith*, and what he had long adher'd to as the Faith deliver'd to the Saints, yet expressing his great Affection to a blessed *Jesus*, and from a comfortable Reflection on that good Hope he has through Grace, breaking forth into an Extasy of Joy, triumphing in his living Redeemer, and closing his Eyes and Lips with a solemn Declaration, that he *loves his Saviour with all his Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength*. In your great Charity towards him, you look upon him as expiring in the very Act of *flat and gross Idolatry*, and consequently have no greater Hopes of him, or (which comes to the same) must *as greatly despair* of his eternal Happiness, as of a *Drunkard* who dies in the midst of his Cups; of a *Swearer*, who breaths out his last with outrageous Oaths and Curses; of an *Adulterer*, whose Soul is requir'd by his Judge whilst in the criminal Embraces of a filthy Strumpet; of a *Sodomite*, judicially cut off in the Perpetration of his unnatural Lusts. Please to inform me in your next, whether this doth not appear a little shocking to your self? I must tell you, 'tis of the *last Concern*, *Not to judge, that you be not judged*, Matt. vii. 1. *To receive him that is weak in the Faith, but not to doubtful Disputations*, Rom. xiv. 1. *Not to judge your Brother, or to set at nought your Brother*, ver. 8. Nor (whilst you blame another for giving a *blasphemous, bloody, murdering Persecutor*, his proper Character) to condemn such

such to everlasting Flames, who may labour as much as your self to walk in all the Laws and Ordinances of the great God blameless ; who shine in the several Graces of the Christian Life, and are Patterns of good Works to all about them.

You say^a, “ For the sake of the plain honest Christian, “ you shall set down in two different Columns, one in the “ unerring Language of the Holy Ghost, concerning Christ, “ and the other in the very Expressions of those in the “ *West*, what a Sort of God the *Arians* think they make “ him, and the Scriptures do *really* make him.” By these “ *two different Schemes*, you say, “ the plainest Christian “ will easily perceive, that the *Arian* makes Christ to be “ a God infinitely different from what the Scriptures do ;” and when this is done, you tell me, “ you will leave me “ and the World to judge, whether the Difference between the *Trinitarian* and *Arian* be not so great and “ *fundamental*, as to alter the whole Scheme of the Christian Religion.” Having done what you design’d, you say again^b, “ *The plainest Christian* may easily see, “ that the Difference between Scripture and Arianism is “ really irreconcilable, and can never stand together.” Again^c, *The plainest Christian* may very easily see, by “ what I have brought from Scripture, and a great deal “ more that might be brought to the same purpose, that “ the Scriptures speak of our blessed Saviour in a very “ different manner from what the *Arians* do.” Once more^d, “ The plain Christian, that looks no farther “ than his Bible, may see, that such Expressions (*viz.* in “ the right Hand Column) are as directly contrary thereto “ as Darkness is to Light.

Possibly, Sir, you may mean by the *plain Christian* (so often mention’d) some particular Christian of your Acquaintance, to whom, by way of *Eminency*, you give that Epithet ; or you may understand it of *many* plain Christians. But if such an *indefinite* Term be equivalent to an *universal* (as we commonly take it) I can’t reconcile what you say to strict Truth. For *many plain honest Christians* have thought, and still think, that the *Arians* make Christ such a God as the Scriptures *really* make him ; they believe, that whether the Difference betwixt the one and the other be greater or smaller, that those

^a Page 10. ^b p. 21. ^c p. 22. ^d *ibid.*

call'd *Arians* are in the right, and those call'd *Trinitarians*, are in the wrong. They have perus'd all the Texts in the left-hand Column, and yet by comparing these with some other Texts which you han't thought fit to mention, they approve of most, or all the Expressions in the opposite Columns. They have not been able to see what appears to you and others so very obvious. You seem too little acquainted with the World to write in so positive a Way, as if you were pronouncing *ex Cathedra*. Would you sometimes intermix such Clauses as these; *so far as I can see, by what I have learn'd; in my poor Judgment; with Submission to wiser Heads; or, being still open to better Information, &c.* more Modesty would be discover'd.

You say ^a, "There are no Clouds, Darknes, or Confusion, in these (*viz.* the *Arian*) Expressions, yet soon after blame these Gentlemen for their metaphysical Wranglings; "this, you say, hath been their *strongest Refuge*, and by this Method they have endeavour'd to puzzle and perplex a very plain Cause, in which *the plain Christian* was entirely satisfied." But this Method they disclaim, and profess they desire no stronger Refuge than the sacred Scriptures, and complain that those Scho-lastick Terms are obtruded upon them, whose Meaning they can't understand; which their Adversaries either refuse to explain, or explain in so intricate and confus'd a manner, as to make the Cause more perplexed than it was before.

You speak of ^b "Mischief that hath sprung from their disturbing the Churches by their unscriptural and most reproachful Notions of *Christ* and the Holy Ghost." The Romanists, you know, make as loud Out-cries against the Hereticks, who disturb the Peace of the Catholick Church, as you do; nay, you can't be ignorant, how great Complaints there have been of *Non-Conformists*, who by their groundless and unreasonable Schism have long been represented as Disturbers of *the best constituted Church in the World*. You tell me, how fond I am of these Gentlemen; I own, I am not pleas'd to hear learned and pious Men, my Fellow-sufferers, as *Dissenters from the national Establishment*; and such as exposed themselves to the Loss of even that *meaner Encourage-*

^a Page 22, ^b P₁ 23,

ment they found amongst us, stigmatised as *Blasphemers*, *Idolaters*, &c. though they submit to the same Rule of Faith, and make as constant Appeals to their Bibles as we do.

You gravely tell me ^a, " Such Terms of Reproach, as " accursed Villains and Monsters of Mankind, I can't find " (that you know) in any of my Brethrens Writings, that " they know what belongs to Humanity and good *Manners*, " and have, upon all Occasions, shewn themselves as " great Enemies to all sanguinary Proceedings, and much " greater Strangers to *all opprobrious Language*, than their " very charitable Opposers have."

You know, Sir, I can find in your Writings *Blasphemy*, *gross* and *flat Idolatry*, (which I thought Terms of Reproach when I first read them, and am of the same Opinion still) charged on Men, perhaps, in no wise inferior to your self. Such as these you take ^b to be no other than " the *Underminers of Christianity* and *Subverters* " of the *Faith* of the *Gospel*;" and say ^c, that " their " *Opinions concerning Christ and the Holy Ghost are most* " *gross and monstrous*." How frightful an Idea must a Stranger have of an *Arian* from your Representation? Can you easily conceive of a more vile and abandon'd Wretch, than one who makes a Profession of Christianity, nay, who is himself a professed Preacher of the Gospel of Christ, and yet blasphemers that very Christ, whose Minister he pretends to be? undermines that Christianity which he is under peculiar Obligations to propagate? subverts and overthrows that Faith of the Gospel, which he is engaged, to his utmost, to support and establish? I still therefore say, that if civil Powers have Authority to punish Hereticks, such a Villain deserves far severer Penalties to be inflicted on him, than on Multitudes of others, whose Injuries to their Neighbours expose them by our Statute Laws to the Gallows. I can't think any Service will redound to Christianity by suggesting such very ill Things as you have done against your Fellow Christians, by dressing them up in Lions or Bear-skins, and setting them forth as Objects of Indignation. You lament ^d in your first Letter, that about *two thousand* of as pious and learned Men as, perhaps, the Church ever had, quitted their Livings, because they could not submit to unscriptu-

^a Page 24. ^b Ibid. ^c Ibid. ^d p. 11, of your first Letter.

ral Terms. But give me Leave to ask you, What if they had been *two thousand Arians*, ought they to have remained quiet Possessors of their Posts? If you say, No; They ought to suffer an immediate Expulsion, and that Gentlemen must have more regard to their own Souls, the Souls of their Families, the Souls of their Tenants and Neighbours, than to permit such Deceivers, Blasphemers, Idolaters, Deniers of the Lord that bought them, &c. to drop their *envenom'd Spittle*, and poison whole Towns and Parishes; and that though many of their ignorant Hearers, whom, by their *deluding Tongues*, they had beguiled into a Fondness for their Persons, and perhaps their Notions too, cleaved to them: This was no Argument with those, who knew better, to let such alone, who were likely to do Mischief every Day, and impose upon the Unlearned and Unstable to their utter Destruction; and that were it in your Power, you would not only discourage *Arianism* by praying, preaching, and writing against it, but by silencing the Promoters of it, and driving them away from those among whom they vented their Blasphemies, whom they drew aside to Idolatry, &c. if their infatuated Followers would not leave them of *their own accord* themselves. May not then these Things be said (*mutatis mutandis*) of the Enemies to *Diocesan Episcopacy*? Must Gentlemen submit themselves, and those with whom and for whom they were concern'd, to the Direction of those whose Ministrations they thought null and void, whom they look'd upon as having no more Authority to preach, baptize, dispense the Lord's Supper, &c. than their *Foot-boys* or *Scullions* had? But if you say, or think, that Magistrates (*as such*) have nothing to do to interpose their Power for encouraging or discouraging such religious Opinions, as are supposed no way to affect their own Grandeur and Security on their Thrones, (if crowned Heads) or their Usefulness in any other Form of Government, or the Peace and Tranquility of Subjects: Such an Assertion as this will at once cashier all *Ecclesiastical Tithes*, and, in a very great Measure, cut off those Complaints which have been made, with Reference to the Ejection of those from their respective Parishes, by those who (on the fore-mentioned Hypothesis) had no Right to thrust them on any such Parishes, or oblige their Parishioners to pay them what they did; not now to take Notice of divers Friends to Bishops, Liturgy, &c. as afterwards appear'd, as well

as *Antipædobaptists*, *Quakers*, &c. scatter'd up and down in the several Parishes committed to the Charge of those that pass'd under the Denomination of *Presbyterians*.

I am sensible your strong Inclination to expose the mention of Controversies as circumstantial, made you bring in that Paragraph ^a of your first Letter by Head and Shoulders, and lash out into the spiteful Impertinence one there finds.

You say ^b, " I am pleased to ask you, what you have " written in Vindication of the eternal Deity of the Son " and Holy Ghost ? " I do so, (as I justly might) thinking 'twas your Business to vindicate these Doctrines ; not that the Sermon preached and printed by Mr. N. made it so, but your own Assertion, which I'll once more transcribe ^c : " It is the Vindication of the eternal " *Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost*, that is the chief Occasion of this Letter." And pray, Sir, tell me, how the Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost hath been vindicated from the Slurs and Opposition of Mr. *Nation*. You have, indeed, labour'd to prove *Socinians* and *Arians* inconsistent with themselves, as not acting agreeably to their own Schemes, because they worship One who is not God in the strictest Sense ; but (though they *both* deny the Charge) on the Supposition that *Woltzogenius* and his Brethren, with all others who believe the Son's Inferiority to the Father, act a *defenseless* Part, and that their Principles and Practices jostle one against the other ; Are you willing *Christianity* it self should stand on such a precarious Bottom, or rather such a mistaken and false Foundation ? Is there an exact Harmony between the *Bibles* and the *Lives* of the Professors of the Christian Faith ? Should a Deist slur the Christian Faith, would you think it a sufficient Vindication of your Principles, as a Christian, to prove an Inconsistency in some Part of *his* Conduct with *deistical* Notions ? A *Deist* surely may act a consistent Part, and a professed Christian as inconsistent an one. If a Person should (according to your Way of representing Things) slur and oppose *Infant Baptism*, by some favourable Insinuations on the side of the *Antipædobaptists*, whom he might imagine to have been, in some Instances, groundlessly vilified and reproached, and you should hereupon write a Book, informing your Readers, in the Begin-

^a Page 11, 12, 13. ^b p. 24. ^c p. 4. of your first Letter.

ning of it, that the Vindication of Infant Baptism was the chief Occasion hereof, might it not justly be expected that you should state the Controversy, produce your Arguments, answer the Objections of your Adversaries, &c. ? But if, instead of all this, you only quarrel'd with their Friend for thinking and speaking too well of such erroneous Persons, and undertook (notwithstanding his Suggestions to the contrary) to prove them guilty of an absurd and contradictory Management : Don't you think the Design of *such a Piece* would be bravely answer'd ?

If the Charge of Inconsistency lies, as a dead Weight ^a, upon the Arians darling Notion, the same Charge lies with equal Weight on Christianity in general : For who, alas ! can say, his Head, Heart, and Life, are uniform with his Bible ? Nay, do not the far greater Number of such as call themselves Christians act in *most direct* and *diametrical* Opposition to the Doctrines and Precepts of their holy Religion ?

What I have mentioned ^b, (in my Letter to you) was never yet baffled, that I could ever yet see, nor do I think will, before the New Testament it self be baffled too, viz. " That we must worship the Father through the Son, by the Assistance of the Spirit." Nor have I ever met with any Protestant Divine, before your self, who cavil'd at such an Assertion. If you say, the Term [Father] must always be conceived by Christian Worshipers, as inclusive of the Son and Holy Ghost (as you seem to do) I fear you'll involve not only the professed *Arians*, but the greater Part of Christians of every Denomination in the Guilt of Idolatry ; for, however certain it may appear to you that the Scriptures never *exclude* Son and Holy Ghost from being Objects of Worship, it can't be so certain that Christians *include* them in their Addresses to God, through the Son, by the Holy Ghost. Whenever therefore, in their Supplications or Thanksgivings, they do not address the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (as the One most high God) through the Son by the Holy Ghost, they are chargeable with this heinous Sin, according to your *Hypothesis*.

Arians will not scruple to beseech the Lord Jesus Christ, as one to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is committed, as well as St. Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10.

^a Page 25.

^b p. 8.

and Dr. Clark himself (as you observe) owns it, because it affected not his Scheme; who likewise acknowledges the Words in *Acts* i. 24. to be most properly meant of Christ. Nor could I see Reason why any of my Friends the *Arians* (as you call them) should quibble about the fore-mention'd Texts, when they allow St. *Stephen* to address directly the *Lord Jesus*, for the receiving his Spirit. That Place in *2 Cor.* xiii. 14. and that in *2 Thess.* ii. 16, 17. appear difficult on every Scheme, except the *Sabellian*, if the Father, as the *Fountain of Deity*, should be set in the first Place.

I say, Christ must be worshipped as Mediator, though I have no where intimated that he ought to be worship'd on no other Account. Angels, as you observe, must worship him; and though he be not such a Mediator for Angels as for Men, yet he has been represented, by Divines, as the *Head of Confirmation* to such; nay, for any thing you or I know to the contrary, Angels may be commanded to worship him, as Mediator betwixt God and Men, though they need not his Mediation for themselves. I must confess, in the first Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, where Angels are called upon to worship Christ, he appears, to me, to be consider'd only as Mediator. He is said, *Heb.* i. 2. to be appointed *Heir of all Things*, ver. 4. to be made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by *Inheritance* obtained a more excellent Name than they, ver. 3. having by himself purged our Sins, he sat down on the right Hand of the Majesty on high. As Mediator, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name: That at the Name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, &c. *Phil.* ii. 9, 10. As Mediator, he is on the right Hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers, being made subject to him. *1 Pet.* iii. 22.

You say^a, whatever I think, you are "under no Necessity of distinguishing between Worship and Worship; " the Worship paid to the great God, through a Mediator, " and the Worship paid to him, who is Mediator, for the " Worship is the same." But do you believe, in earnest, that as we must worship God the Father through Christ, so we must worship Christ through God the Father? If we must not, the Worship is not the same.

I am concern'd to find you (in serving the Cause of Bigotry) unwarily plunging all those who worship Christ as Mediator *into*, and leaving them *in* the same damnable and deplorable State with the *idolatrous Arians*. That all such who address the Son as the Lamb that had been slain, believe on him, come to him, trust in him, adore and praise him under that Consideration, are also reckon'd by you among such as *shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*. Are not the Devotions of pious Souls animated by their Contemplations of a crucified Saviour? What an easy (nay, almost necessary) Transition is there from *serious and intense Reflections* on the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension and Intercession of a blessed *Jesus*, to the *worshipping* of him on these Accounts? Won't you allow it to be exceeding difficult, if not impossible, to keep the Mind in a perpetual Abstraction from our Lord's Humanity, and fix it entirely on his Divinity, as often as any Ejaculations are offer'd up to him? But were this possible and easy, Christians would be robb'd of those many sweet and delightful Meditations on the human Nature of Christ, where-with they now entertain themselves, least they should be drawn into a Snare, and must accordingly be warned to abstain from all *Incentives* to, and all *Appearance* of Evil; as not to worship a Crucifix, so neither the Man *Christ Jesus* himself extended on the Cross. We must admonish our People, in the Language of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. x. 7. *Neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them*. If "we ought to pay Christ, as to his human Nature, the highest Respect that is due to any created Being," (as you say) we may soon, by doing so, transgress the Bounds, and, unawares, pay him such Respect, as will expose us to the Charge of Idolatry: The Difference between *religious Worship*, and a *distinguishing Respect*, not being so obvious to all. I would therefore recommend to your Perusal a late accurate Performance, *viz.* "A sober and charitable Disquisition concerning the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, particularly with regard to Worship," &c. where you'll find whatever occurs in your Letter to me about the Importance of this Doctrine, as to Worship, distinctly consider'd.

You ask me^a, "Whether *Creed-makers, Persecutors, and Imposers*, have given the least Advantage to the *Deists*?"

I again ask, Whether you never heard of *Deists* in *Italy*? and whether the Infidels in that Nation are the *Dregs* of *Arians*? If you go no farther than *South-Britain*, how few *Deists* will you find among those who dissent from *Ecclesiastical Impositions*? unless you reckon some *Quakers* to be such, who, I believe, will not, upon Inquiry, be found to have been *Arians* first. Nay, who have written of late most strenuously against *Scepticks* and *Free-thinkers*, both among Non-Conformists, and the Divines of the National Establishment? Are they not chiefly such as have been either suspected to be *Arians* themselves, or, at least, *their* hearty Friends? Though *Arians*, *Scepticks*, and *Free-thinkers*, are, by you, *artfully enough* joined together; is it not from the Bowels of a Trinitarian Church, that these Enemies of our holy Religion come, or rather in the Bowels of such a Church, that they still remain? Not that I intend this as any Reflection on the *Trinity*, and could gladly have forborn taking any Notice thereof, had not your absurd and false Insinuations to the contrary, in a manner, compel'd me to it. Men of dissolute Lives can as easily part with one Scheme as another, and as readily embrace *any one* that they fancy will let them alone in the Prosecution of their Lusts.

I can't hinder the Complements which, you hint, have been paid the *Deists* ^a, but don't think they were meant *as such* by any who receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, whatever peculiar Sentiments they may have, which 'tis none of my present Business either to justify or condemn; though the *Deist*, however he may *sneer*, has no Reason to charge those with *Priestcraft*, who, by departing from received Opinions, expose themselves to Censures and Inconveniencies of divers Kinds. If vast Numbers of lazy Drones and Epicures will chime in with the Imposers of a Set of Articles, Ceremonies, &c. to fill their *Purses*, or, at least, their *Bellies*, without previous Examination, (to prevent some *Twitches* of Conscience, perhaps, on *such* an Examination) here the *Deist* has some Room for the fore-mentioned Charge. But to tax a Man with *Priestcraft*, who finds himself obliged to give up a Notion as not *found in*, or *founded upon* his *Bible*, which he *once* thought had been in it, must prove the

Deist to be exceeding *filly*, as well as *rude*, and as distant from common *Sense*, as from common *Civility*.

I see no Reason to fear the Increase of Infidelity by fallible Creatures leaving the Opinions of their Forefathers, nor their own *quondam* ones, if they think there's Cause for it, whilst they still submit to the holy Scriptures, as the only Rule of their Faith and Practice. Whatever ceases in a Person's *present View of Things* to be the Faith, or the Doctrine of the Gospel must be given up, and into whose Hands soever it may fall, his *own* Hands must be discharged of it.

"*Creed-makers*, and those who hereticate and damn " their Fellow-Creatures, have, by their stiff and unyielding Methods," (whatever you may suggest to the contrary) done apparent Disservice to Christianity in general, as well as the several supposed Tenets thereof which they have aim'd to propagate. They are *Profelytes* I should hardly think worth looking after, who must either be flatter'd or frown'd, brib'd or cudgel'd into their *Orthodoxy*; nor is it so certain, as you say, that *Deists never took Creed-makers to be their Friends, and Promoters of their Cause*,

You cite " a Sentence of mine, which you think " more favourable to the Cause of Deism, than can be produced out of all the Writings of the Trinitarians, *viz.* " *That if any of them can plead their Sincerity in a Judgment-Day, this Plea, through the Merits of Christ, shall be accepted.*" Here you insult me for my *loose Divinity*, invidiously mentioning the *Alcoran* and *Leviathan*. You ask me, *where the Bible speaks thus loosely*? Sir, I don't say it speaks any where *loosely*; but it speaks in Words to the same Effect with mine, in *Acts* x. 34, 35. *Then Peter opened his Mouth, and said, Of a Truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of Persons: But in EVERY NATION he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him.* 'Tis what I can't easily account for, that so *peremptory* and *fastidious* a Writer as your self, should, at the same Time, be so unsufferably *careless*: And, when you speak scornfully of another's *reading*, should so egregiously bewray your own Ignorance, or something worse. I therefore ask you, Whether *Tillor-*

son, Burnet, Wilkins, Scot, Barrow, and, indeed, the generality of the Writers in the Church of England since the Restoration, were *Trinitarians* or not? who have express'd themselves (at least several of them) very copiously on this Head, and taken not a little Pains, as Advocates for those Parts of the World where the Gospel is not preach'd; I mean, for all the *sincere ones* in those Parts. Are not the *Dutch Remonstrants* *Trinitarians*? who yet speak the same Language: Nay, some *Calvinists* have express'd their favourable Thoughts of sincere Heathens too, and more (if I am not mistaken) in this last Age than heretofore: Nay, what can you mean your self when you represent it as a gross Error, opposite to Revelation, and join'd with those which you think destructive of Christianity, *viz.* "That God will make no Distinction hereafter between the best and worst of the Heathen World, but will doom all promiscuously, together with the non-adult Children of Christians, to the same *eternal Insensibility*?" You therefore suppose a Distinction to be made between the best and worst of the Heathen World; that some are better than others, and that consequently it shall fare better with some than with others. For my Part, I han't deliver'd my self with that Freedom concerning the *Sincerity of Heathen Idolaters*, as you seem to do; nor have I said anything in Favour of the *Mahometans*, *Papists*, *Deists*, and *Antinomians*, as to their *Sincerity*, leaving them all to their great Judge. The whole Sense of this dreadful Position, for which I am arraign'd as a *Mahometan* and an *Hobbist*, amounts to no more than thus much, that *every sincere Soul, through the Merits of Christ, shall be accepted*; a Truth, which, as long as I remain a Protestant, I purpose to preach; not knowing on what to rest the Sole of my Foot, nor on what my Hearers will rest theirs, but *SINCERITY*, through the Merits of Christ. I am utterly at a Loss to conceive what, besides this, can give one, who professes himself *fallible*, any Peace or Satisfaction, as to his eternal State, living and dying; whether *Arian* or *Trinitarian*, *Calvinist* or *Arminian*, he has not (that I can see) any Thing else to betake himself unto.

I can't easily persuade my self, that *Faith in Christ* is required of those, who have ever been, and still are, under an invincible Impossibility of obtaining it, any more than it is of Infants; nor can I make it consistent with infinite

nite Wisdom and Justice (not to say infinite Goodness) to have it otherwise.

A Deist is under no just Temptation from hence to think, "That Christianity is a useless Institution^a," any more than he is to think, that the various Blessings of Providence, which accommodate and embellish human Life, are *useless* Things, because such Multitudes of the poorer Sort can't reach them; though I own the *Simile* not to be significant enough; for what is the Body to the nobler Soul? Even in this Life Christianity affords Comforts to a *sincere* Practitioner of it, vastly superior to what Deism, Paganism, the Mahomelan Religion; nay, the Jewish can furnish their respective Votaries with. If the Christian finds in his Bible complete Atonement made to divine Justice for every Sin repented of, a plenary Remission of Sin consequential hereon, Freedom of Access to his heavenly Father procur'd by a Mediator; Promises of the constant and necessary Influences of the Holy Spirit, for the Performance of all Christian Duties, and Exercise of all Christian Graces; Support from that blessed Comforter under the most pressing Afflictions; the Guardianship and Ministration of Angels, the glorious Resurrection of his Body to Life everlasting, &c. he won't surely think it worth his while to change his Religion for *Deism*. *Sincere* Christians will see no Reason to envy *sincere* Deists, &c. (if there should be any such, for this I aver not) to envy such, I say, their Happiness either here or hereafter.

You say^b, that "you are very sorry the World should be tempted to believe, that all Errors of the Understanding, though never so repugnant to the greatest Truths of the Gospel, are innocent, or at least very pardonable Mistakes." What do you mean by *Errors of the Understanding*? Such as descend by Tradition from Father to Son, to Grandson, to great Grandson, &c. as Estates do that have been in some Families several Hundred Years; or such as Ambition, Luxury, Covetousness, a dread of Persecution, &c. prevail with a Man to admit into his Understanding: Principles of *such an Original*, whether they happen to be Errors or Truths, to agree or not to agree with the Gospel, are of the same Account with God. If Laziness or Pride, or Profaneness, should direct

^a Page 30. ^b *ibid*.

the Tongue in a Declaration, or the Hand in a Subscription, it signifies not a rush, whether the Decrees of the Synod of *Dort*, or the Council of *Trent*; whether the Common-Prayer-Book, or the Mass-Book; nay, whether the Bible or the Alcoran come first in the way. By *the greatest Truths of the Gospel*^a, do you mean such as *appear to your self* to be the greatest Truths; when others (perhaps of *equal* Capacity and Sincerity with your self) can't find them contain'd in the Gospel *at all*? And so are laid under an absolute Necessity of rejecting them, or at least of suspending their Assent unto them, till you, or somebody else, can offer something more than they have yet met with for their Conviction. Ay, but you'll say, you mean such as are *REALLY*, and in *themselves*, the *greatest Truths*. But then let me tell you, Sir, this is the Language of a *divinely inspir'd* Person. Could you once be remov'd from this constant *Asylum*, this perpetual Refuge of *Infallibility* (wherein you are so strongly intrench'd) 'twere easy to answer a thousand such Letters as *this* under my Hand; but on the *Hypothesis* whereon you proceed, *throughout*, I must own my self (a poor fallible Creature) vastly overmatch'd. But you must produce better Credentials than you have yet done, to assure me, that in some *speculative Points*, amongst a *variety of Judgments*, you have received Authority to pronounce who are *sound* in the Faith of the Gospel, and who are *unsound*, who are *Orthodox*, and who are *Hereticks*; and to declare, "that such who agree in the necessary Duties of Piety and Charity^b, may not yet hold one Article of the Faith of the Gospel;" because not believing as you would have them.

To your vapouring Exclamation^c, "Is not this *fine Divinity*!" may I retort, is not this *fine Protestantism*? Can the *Pope* himself (who, I dare say, won't part with his triple Crown to Mr. *P. C.*) talk in a more imperious, arrogant Style, against supposed *Hereticks* and their *Abettors*, than you have here done. You seem to fear^d, least "*Charity, Meekness, and Moderation, those Graces of the Spirit* now pretended to, should undermine divine Truths and Doctrines." I am asham'd to think, that the Enemies of Christianity should make greater Pretences to these excellent Graces, than many of its professed

^a Page 30. ^b *ibid.* ^c *ibid.* ^d p. 6.

Friends. I am sure, our holy Religion teaches the best Sense, the best Manners, the most extensive and unconfined Charity; yet, alas! a senseless and irregular Zeal for particular Modes and Forms of Worship, or some peculiar Opinions, has converted the far greater part of the Christianiz'd World into CLOWNS and BRUTES. General Expressions of Civility, and external Forms of Complaisance, may indeed continue, when there is a sufficient Stock of Dissimulation to support them; but at how great a Distance are these plac'd from that brotherly Love, and tender Affection to Christians *as Christians*, so powerfully recommended by the Example and Precepts of our Lord and Saviour? So that I have been ready to conclude, even in *this polite Age*, that it is hardly possible for him, who is *very much of a Bigot*, to be in a Scriptural or Christian Sense *very much of a Gentleman*. I wish therefore you had transcrib'd a little more from that ingenious Author (as you deservedly stile him) in his Discourse of *Charity*, instead of a Fragment, or piece of a Sentence; but the Citation of the whole Period would not have serv'd your purpose. I'll therefore take a little more out of him for your and my Readers perusal. He says^a, "We may observe
 " the Excellency of our holy Religion, in its contriving to
 " render Men *so good to one another*. Christianity would
 " have no Temper or Turn of Mind indulged, that shall
 " make us in the least hurtful or unfriendly. It would
 " have us be very tender of every Man's Reputation, rather covering Faults than exposing and aggravating
 " them. ^b All that Goodness and Humanity now pretended to, by the Opposers of reveal'd Religion, would
 " appear (as it really is) very imperfect, and a meer
 " Shadow; if Christian Charity, which is the Substance,
 " could be revived in its primitive Extent and Lustre.
 " As therefore Benevolence and good Nature are set up to
 " be the main Promoters of *Deism* at present, let us endeavour to exceed in this Way, and our Religion will
 " triumph against all their other Attacks. ^c By Love the
 " *Truth* will be best explain'd, and the Knowledge of it
 " most easily and effectually spread; and then *Faith* will
 " exalt the Minds of Men to a World of perfect Love and
 " Goodness, instead of setting them at variance amongst
 " themselves." In *Sett. IV.* of the forementioned Dis-

^a Page 158. ^b p. 159. ^c p. 160;

course, where the Author treats of Mercy or Charity, with respect to *Differences* in Religion, many lively Expressions occur suiting my present Design, not unworthy of the Readers serious Thoughts. He seem'd, I must confess, fond of keeping to the *very Words of Revelation*, without obliging Persons to a Submission to the *uncertain Glosses* that others may put upon them. This, indeed, is what the *Arians* contend for, who are willing to part with all their *Metaphysicks*, when once they can get their Brethren to lay aside *theirs*. And I must think with them, that Doctrines for which we are *entirely* indebted to Revelation, are best express'd in the Words of Revelation only.

I am not accountable for that brain-sick Expression of *Socinus*^a, yet would I have Men, who seriously read their Bibles "allow'd and encourag'd to believe what they please;" nor would I have those who reject the Bible answer'd by corporal Pains and Penalties; *Goals* and *Fines* being wretched Arguments for the Confutation of Infidels. And I would intreat you, Sir, a Protestant Dissenter, not to provoke to Jealousy our Civil Governors, who may sometime or other, as *LOVERS OF THE FAITH* (or which will be understood as one, *LOVERS OF THE CHURCH*) make use of severer Methods, than we have yet felt in this Age, to bring *Infidels* and *Schismaticks* to a *Soundness* in the *Truths* of the *Gospel*. The true Sons of the Church well know (whatever an *amphibious*, *ambidexter*, *illegitimate* Brood say to the contrary) that 'tis this *curst Toleration* of tender and scrupulous Consciences (*whose Sincerity in their Errors won't excuse them*) that has done all the Mischief. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* Hence have come the Groans of mournful *Sion*, the sorrowful and heart-piercing Complaints of a bleeding, sinking Church; and unless there be a *general* Amputation of rotten and gangren'd *Members*, must not all Prospects of restoring perfect Health to the Body be cut of? They who reckon themselves the proper (if not the sole) Stewards of the Mysteries of God among us, are for *discouraging such Latitudes*, and accordingly place those, who don't believe the Bible as they would have them (but nourish Schisms and Heresies in the Church) on the same foot with those who don't believe it at all. Whilst then I am pleading

the Cause of such as you call Hereticks, I speak on my own behalf, who know not what damnable Errors (relating both to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church) may in time be laid to my Charge. You must be sensible as well as I, that an Act of Parliament can make us all, whether *Arians* or *Trinitarians*, unsound, and distress us for want of more perfect *Orthodoxy*.

I think with Mr. N. "That a Minister's Business is very much restrain'd to practical Religion," though I know you insisted on the *Schemes* of fallible and mistaken Men, as Things of "equal Necessity and Importance"^a, and "strangely thought, you had abundantly prov'd it"^b, from "a great Number of Texts of Scripture;" which you had no need to have tir'd your self with enumerating, inasmuch as they had all of them a Reference to practical Christianity, as opposed to *Judaism* or *Gentilism*. I therefore pass'd them all over, not thinking them worthy of the least regard as they stood in your Book, or able to serve the Purpose for which you brought them. To say, "that a Doctrine is slighted or slurred," because a Man's eternal State is not suppos'd or allowed to be necessarily concern'd in it, is mere Calumny.

St. Paul in his Epistles to the Churches of *Galatia*, *Ephesus*, *Philippi*, &c. warn'd them against such Errors as certainly drew them off from believing practically (which alone is sound believing) that *Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and God over all*. If by leaving the *Christian*, and returning to the *Jewish* or *Gentile* Religion, or by mingling the former with the latter, they "subverted" the *Christian* Religion, and fell from the Grace of the "Gospel," 'twas impossible they should adhere (as they ought) to the former Doctrines.

You seem very willing^c, to condemn me out of my own Mouth. You say, "I take it for granted, that an *Arian* may keep the *Laws of Christ*." I own, I do so; and yet believe that such a one may swerve not a little from the *Faith of Christ*. But then, Sir, I likewise believe that this is the Case of every Mortal, as well as the *Arian*; that there's not at present one to be found under the Heavens that swerves not a little from the Faith of Christ, or (which is synonymous) from the *Christian Revelation*; not only from the Practice of Christian Duties, but from

^a Page 31. ^b p. 32. ^c p. 33.

the right Meaning of a Multitude of Texts in the New Testament, as well as the Old. 1 Cor. xiii. 9. *We know in part, and we prophesy in part.* St. Paul reckons himself with the rest, whose Knowledge was yet imperfect; and I take it for granted, that even that *inspir'd* Apostle is far more ORTHODOX now he is in Heaven, than while he was on Earth.

Having triumph'd over my suppos'd Inconsistency, you ask me^a, whether "Mr. *Hobbs* was found in the Faith," because he appear'd to be a sober Person. As to his "denying the very Being of a God," you and I are much of a Mind. And do you think such a one could keep the Laws of *Christ*, or have a Conversation becoming the Gospel of *Christ*, who did not believe there was any such Person as the *Messias*? Can Mr. *Collins's* Conduct be justified on any Principles, either of *natural* or *revealed* Religion, who publickly submitted to the most solemn Institutions of one, whom he thought a *notorious Impostor*, and frequently offer'd up Prayers and Praises to the great God, in the Name of the *pretended* Saviour of the Christians? Such horrid Prevarication with a most holy, just, jealous, and powerful Being, might tempt one to think, his Thoughts of a *Deity* rose no higher than those of his Predecessor *Hobbs*. As to *Parsons* the Jesuit, and *Thomas à Kempis*, with many other sober Men of the Church of *Rome*, I can allow that they keep the Laws of *Christ*, as far as they receive them from *Christ*; but if there is a Submission to them as coming from the *Pope*, or the *Church*, so far the sole Head of the Church is rejected, though the Ordinances of *Men* might fall out to be the same with the Ordinances of *Christ*. For Instance, should I submit to those Laws which are ratified by *King George the Second*, in Conjunction with his Parliament, yet not receive them under that Consideration, but as they come to my Hands under the Hand and Seal of the *Chevalier de St. George*; it could not, I think, in Propriety of Speech be said, that I kept the Laws of *King George the Second*. After all, I can't say how much, or how little Regard the devout Gentlemen in the *Romish* Church have paid to *Christ* as their Head. Charity obligeth me to think as favourably of all Persons as possible. 'Tis well known, many of them have groan'd under the Abominations of a Church, which yet

^a Page 33.

they have not cared to abandon. Perhaps that *Ecclesiastical Scare-Crow* [SCHISM] (which has frighten'd so many that call themselves PROTESTANTS) may have made too great Impressions on them. If *Socrates* and *Epictetus* (who, you say, had no Faith at all) had had a Conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, I must have suppos'd them *found in the Faith* of such a Gospel. Nay, *Antinomians* themselves, who (as you say, and I believe) "are many" of them Persons of great Probity and Virtue," as far as they are so, must be deem'd found in the Faith; though they don't, or can't express themselves so accurately (at least in our Opinion) as others do, we must suppose their Hearts are sound. I say the same of "some of those that" I reckon up, and those many others that are reckon'd up "by *Ireneus, Epiphanius, Austin, &c.*" who might be condemn'd for *Hereticks* by saucy, pragmatical, imperious Worms, who prov'd *themselves* guilty of *Schism* and *Heresy*, in an unrighteous Rejection of their Brethren. I here only intend Persons of *religious Conversation*, who did not *voluntarily* withdraw, but were *driven* from the Communion of Christian Societies.

Why, Sir, must "the Gospel be as nothing to Mankind," and the Faith of the Gospel, by which we are justified, be a *Name* and *nothing else*; if sober Men of all Sects, who submit to the Laws of the Gospel, are esteem'd, so far as they do so, found in the Faith? I must complain of your gross Perversion of my Words in the *sarcastical* Periods of *p 34*. Rhetorical Flourishes of this sort may make undue Impressions on some Readers, wherefore they deserve to be animadverted on. My Words are, "They who keep the *Laws* of Christ do surely keep the *Faith* of Christ. A *Gospel* Conversation necessarily demonstrates a *Gospel* Faith." For the Proof hereof I cite two valid Witnesses, our blessed Saviour and St. *James*. I say, that "*Faith* and *Practice* are necessarily united in every *true* Christian." Can it possibly be inferr'd from these Assertions, that "Believers and Unbelievers are found in the Faith; that there is no difference between Truth and Error; that both Parts of a Contradiction are true; and that Sense and Non-sense are the same Thing?" I challenge you to produce any Syllable of mine, that encourages you to fasten such an Absurdity

upon me, viz. that “ *Mahometans at Constantinople, and* “ *Hearthens in China or Japan,*” are found in the Christian Faith, though they never heard a Tittle of the Christian Revelation. They may, indeed, produce their Sobriety as an Evidence of their Regard to Natural Religion; but that they should produce it as an Evidence of their soundness in the Christian Religion, with which they are altogether unacquainted, is perfectly unintelligible. If they lead *good Lives* they must be suppos’d to have a *good Faith*, as far as it goes; that is to say, some good Notions of a superior Being, &c. ’Tis therefore ridiculous to say they have *no Faith at all*, for then their Lives can have no *Goodness* at all. The *pretty Similes* (as you call them) which I bring, have the *common Fate* with many other Things in my Letter, *i. e.* not to have one Word said by you in their *Confutation*; for which Reason, they stand in no need of any Words of mine for their *Confirmation*.

My other Conclusion appears equally true, notwithstanding what you urge against it, “ That they who lead “ *vitious and profligate Lives must be Antinomians in* “ *Principle, or have unsound Principles.*” *Ubi malè vivitur non benè creditur*, is with me an undoubted Maxim. A sound Faith in a future State of Rewards and Punishments; a sound Conviction of the inseparable Connexion betwixt a sinful Life here, and a miserable one hereafter, will of course lead to a circumspect Behaviour; and whensoever the Sinner gives a Loose to his sensual Inclinations, in opposition to the Commands and Threats of his Bible, as far as he does so, I’ll pronounce him an *Infidel*. If he breaks the divine Laws without *any* Check or Remorse *at all*, he appears *at that Juncture* a direct Atheist; but if there should be some Struggles of Conscience, during the Pursuit of his outrageous Lusts, and some Remonstrances in his Breast against them; as far as these prove unsuccessful, and are master’d by predominant Corruptions, so far the Sinner’s Faith in the Doctrines of the Gospel, being *weak and ineffectual*, is UNSOUND. ’Tis only a Faith that overcomes the World, as to its Profits, Pleasures and Honours, which I can call a *sound Gospel Faith*. The Terrors, which at any Time return upon wicked Persons, prove that the Principles, which lay *dormant* during their Perpetration of some enormous Fact, are awaken’d; that they have recover’d or recollected those *Idea’s*, which some wild

wild and brutal Desires had, [for a Season, obliterated. Every daring and defenseless Step that a Man takes in Defiance of his Bible, proves him, *at that Time*, to disbelieve it. A Man may act against his *Profession*, and so *condemn himself in the Thing* that he alloweth; may give his Tongue the Lye, may act in Opposition to his *pretended Faith*, but not his *REAL Faith*, so far as it is *REAL*. I own, indeed, the Necessity of divine Assistance, in order to the keeping a sound Conviction of the great Truths of the Gospel on the Minds of Men, which they, who seriously and unfeignedly seek it, may comfortably depend upon. But, however odd the Assertion looks to you, "that every vicious Person must be heterodox and un-sound," I shall still receive it as an unquestionable *Axiom*, founded on Reason and Scripture, that *de non entibus & non apparentibus eadem est Ratio*.

You seem displeased, that *I charge the flagrant Impieties of the present Day on the exploded Errors of the Antinomians*. You might have easily perceived that I took the Word [*Antinomian*] in the most extensive Sense, according to the proper Notation of the Term; because I say ^a, that "*Antinomian Errors, more or less, prevail among some of every Sect.*" I had not surely my Eye upon *actual Justification from Eternity, God's seeing no Sin in his People, Christians not praying for Pardon, &c.* Many, who yet, I believe, were good Men, fell heretofore into such (*in my Opinion*) extravagant Ways of thinking (or, at least, expressing their Thoughts) perhaps from a Detestation of Popery and *Arminianism*; but having, *in the main*, a Gospel Conversation, I consider them, for that Reason, *in the main*, Possessors of a Gospel Faith. Those *Antinomian Errors*, which you speak of as *exploded*, have not been much insisted on in this last Age; but, I believe, you'll not refuse to acknowledge, that our Land abounds with such *Antinomians*, as you mention ^b; "who (you say) in a Sense, even condemn all the Laws of God." They who do so, may easily call *all Religion Cheat and Priestcraft*; or think ^c, *they shall fall into a State of Insensibility*, or that *God has left them entirely to their Liberty to act and believe as they please*; i. e. that they shall not be accountable to him for their Faith or Manners. These loose Principles I call *Antino-*

^a Page 22. of my Letter.

^b p 47.

^c p. 36;

mian ones ; the Term [*Antinomian*] being the most significant and comprehensive I could meet with.

Sir, I have no where said, that a *sober Man* may be a *good Christian*. Sometimes, the natural Constitution enforces a greater Regularity of Manners than consists with sinful Propensions, and sometimes, the superior Deference paid to the Gods of Silver and Gold calls for a comparative Neglect of the inferior God the Belly ; nor is it uncommon, even in these Days of Riot and Debauchery, for the *Niggard* to get the Ascendant over the *Drunkard*. But, setting aside these Considerations, common Sense will direct a Man to a sober Life. *Epicurus* himself, who placed the *summum bonum*, or chief Happiness in the Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures, is yet reported to have been a temperate and abstemious Philosopher, pursuant to his own Maxim, which was, *Not so to enjoy a present Pleasure, as thereby to destroy the Enjoyments of the Day following*. A profess'd *Atheist* may therefore lead a *sober*, but not a *Gospel* or *Christian* Conversation, because this latter must be founded on *Gospel* or *Christian* Principles. I may yet be mistaken in my Neighbour, of whom I am obliged to judge as charitably as I can, and think *that* to be a *Gospel* Conversation, which is not ; but then my Mistake arises from my Ignorance of that *Faith*, or those *Principles*, which influence such a Conversation, which I take to be *Christian* or *Gospel* ones, when they are not so.

You still suggest ^a, that *Arianism* hath brought on " a visible and most melancholy Decay of *practical Christianity* ;" but unless you can shew such a Connexion between the Principles of the *Arians*, and a dissoluteness of Manners, as is obvious to every Observer between *Antinomian Principles* and *ungodly Practices*, your loudest Censures of Mr. N. or my self, are like to be disregarded by us.

I dislike, as much as your self, " a vain and proud Conceit of our own Abilities to act well, though God should leave us to ourselves ^b." But you know, Sir, *Arians* are as little chargeable herewith as *Trinitarians* ; both sides differing in their Notions, with respect to the *Quinquarticular Points*, as they are called ; nor can I see what Purpose it serves to force Things of this Nature into the present Controversy.

^a Page 37.

^b p. 36.

You complain ^a of a mighty *Pother* and *Outcry* that I have made about your saying, that *Mens Sincerity in Errors will not excuse them*. This Expression (*calm*, as you think it) effectually destroys the Hopes. of every sincere Christian that believes himself liable to mistake, and consequently cuts the Sinews of all *Christian Industry*; it robs the holiest Person breathing of all comfortable Prospects of a better State, and necessarily furrounds him with melancholy and gloominess. 'Tis impossible, that one cheerful Ejaculation can come from his Breast towards Heaven, who is brought to believe that his Sincerity in Errors will not excuse him, when nothing but his *Sincerity*, through the Blood of Christ, can solace him under all the Errors which he is obnoxious to. That *mighty Pother*, which you have made, in your learned and elaborate Attempt, to clear your self of my Charge against you on this Head, seems therefore to me very lame and insufficient, unless a *bare* scornful Repetition of my Words, without the least Remarks made upon them, must pass for an Answer.

Your giving a scandalous Persecutor the honourable Name of *SAINT Paul*, so often as you have done, is (to say the best of it) a *great Solecism*, who, before his Conversion, was so far from being a *Saint*, that he deserved *all the Characters* I gave him, and which you have *so carefully* transcribed. To what I mention, as aggravating his Wickedness, in my first Letter, I now superadd, that his Residence was in *Jerusalem*, where Christianity shone in its brightest Lustre, where it was not only faithfully preached, but attested by a surprizing Succession of Miracles. He had heard *St. Stephen's* excellent Apology at his *Death*, (of which he takes Notice, *Acts* xxii. 20.) and had, doubtless, heard *many Apologies* every Day made by the Saints, while under his inhuman Hands; for 'tis very unlikely that they should have nothing to say for themselves, when dragg'd from the Synagogues. What an obdurate inflexible Wretch must he be, whom the Arguments of the *Learned*, the Tears and Groans of the *Innocent*, the piteous Lamentations of Widows and Orphans could not move? Let it be farther observed, that this bloody Service was not *forced* upon him, but what he rather *forced* himself into, *Acts* ix. 1, 2.

Saul yet breathing out Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest; and desired of him Letters to Damascus to the Synagogues, that if he found any of this Way, whether they were Men or Women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. Mr. Henry therefore calls him, in his Notes on Acts xxvi. the Devil that cast some of them into Prison; yet you complain of my using "a lavish and outrageous Rudeness of Language," concerning One, of whom too bad Things could not easily be said, while you allow, in your self, so great a Severity of Style towards some of equal Rank for Piety and Learning with your self. You say, this is such "an Indecency in a Divine, as, you think, should always be forborn." Pray, how long has this unaccountable Squeamishness seiz'd you? Is it not the proper Business of a Divine to represent Sin and Sinners in their true Colours? See Prov. xxiv. 24. *He that saith unto the Wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the People curse; Nations shall abhor him.* Not now to cite the many severe Characters under which Sinners go in the Old Testament; what do you think of those Expressions, dropping from the Lips of the meek and lowly Jesus himself, in the New? Matt. xxiii. 13. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites!* an Expression several Times repeated in that Chapter, with most cutting Reproofs and Charges annex'd thereunto. Ver. 16. *Wo unto you, ye blind Guides!* Ver. 17. *Ye Fools and Blind, &c.* Ver. 26. *Thou blind Pharisee!* Ver. 33. *Ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers! How can ye escape the Damnation of Hell?* Was this Language outrageously rude? If not, can I follow a better Pattern? What do you think of St. Peter's Address to Simon Magus? Acts viii. 20, 21, 22, 23. What of St. Paul's to Elymas? Acts xiii. 10. *O full of all Subtilty, and all Mischief, thou CHILD OF THE DEVIL, thou Enemy of all Righteousness!* How do you like the Characters given by St. Peter, of some in his Days, in the second Epistle, Chap. ii. throughout? or St. John's Complaint of Diotrephes? or St. Jude's Words, in his Epistle, Ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19?

You ask me, *What pernicious Tares you have seen^a, in saying that St. Paul was sincere?* St. Paul, Sir, I ever thought sincere, but think it of pernicious Conse-

^a Page 38.

quence to give bloody and unrighteous *Saul* that honourable and distinguishing Title, than which nothing greater can be said of any Saint on this side Heaven. *St. Paul*, you observe, saith, *That he verily thought with himself he ought to do many Things against Jesus of Nazareth*. This, you know, I had taken Notice of my self, and you admit of the Answer which I had given to an Objection, which might be raised from *these Words*, against what I had said, viz. "That he might and should have thought better ^a." His mistaken Notions, though they had blinded his Conscience, were therefore highly criminal: He was not, by your own Confession, under *invincible Ignorance*: His violent Prejudices against the *Christian Revelation*, engaged him to act counter to the Principles of *natural Religion*. He does not tell *Agrippa* what you put into his Mouth, and would fain make him say ^b, viz. "That he "could appeal to the *Jews*, that, from his Youth, he had "behaved with the *greatest Exactness*." He says, indeed, "that, after the most strait Sect of their Religion, "he had lived a Pharisee:" And so he might consistently enough with a Life of abominable Wickedness. He might be very accurate, as a Pharisee, in observing the *Traditions of the Elders*, whilst he neglected *substantial Piety*. You would persuade your Readers, from *Josephus*, that the Pharisees were a very pious Sect, whose Words, as they stand in your Letter to me, are *perfect Nonsense*; but, however that be, a plain honest Christian (who might never see the foremention'd Author) will find a different Account of the *Pharisees* in the New Testament, from the Lips of *Truth* and *Wisdom* it self. By the *Righteousness which is in the Law*, 'tis manifest to me, that the Ceremonial Law is understood, in *Phil. iii. 6*. His telling the Council, *Acts xxiii. 1*. *That he had lived in all good Conscience before God, until that Day*, must be limited to the Time after his Conversion; for he was not examined about his Behaviour, whilst a *Jew*. That Text in *2 Tim. i. 3*. is not fairly cited. He does not thank God, that, from his Forefathers, he had served God with a pure Conscience, but that he now serves him. He serves God as faithfully, as conscientiously, as his Forefathers had done. Can it easily be imagined, that he, who calls himself, *1 Tim. i. 15*. *the chief of Sinners*,

^a Page 40.^b p. 38.

should say he had *always* lived in all good Conscience, and *always* served God with a *pure* Conscience. Surely, we must make some Difference between the *chief* of *Sinners*, and the *chief* of *Saints*. Dr. *Whitby*, Dr. *Hammond*, and others, who talk of *Saul's* Sincerity, (perhaps, from an unjustifiable Deference to St. *Paul*) have no more Weight with *me* in *this* Case, than Dr. *Clark*, Mr. *Jackson*, &c. have with *you* in *another*. By a *SINCERE*, you, and some others, seem to understand a *SEARED* Conscience; and *such* a Conscience a Drunkard, an Adulterer, an oppressing Knave, may have with them in what they do, extolling, applauding them for a successful Prosecution of their base Lusts, and pushing them on to repeated Acts. But *Saul*, and these Wretches, are alike inexcusable, though predominant Corruptions blinded their Reason. A sincere Man will lay himself open to Conviction, and (as far as he acts sincerely) examine every Step he takes, whether in Faith or Practice. 'Twould therefore have been as vain for wicked *Saul* to plead his Sincerity, (when he had *none* to plead) if he had gone out of the World with such a cruel Heart and Hands, as for the vilest Swearers, Whoremongers, Liars, &c. to plead theirs, when they have arrived to the greatest Obduracy in sinning; for if he or they "*might have Consciences*" better "*inform'd, had they attended to the Evidence of Things, as they should have done,*" your long Harangue is quite spoil'd.

If the same may be said of all such as "don't embrace the great Truths of the Christian Religion," I han't a Word to say in their Behalf. But, Sir, I believe a Person, upon rational Evidence, may have a Faith in many Things opposite to mine; "though the Scriptures are to *my self* very full and clear in their Evidence." My Faith in the *Trinity*, *change of the Sabbath*, *Infant Baptism*, *eating of Blood*, may not be the same with his, who yet, I can charitably think, appears to himself to have as rational Evidence for his different Sentiments, as I have for my own. I leave it to the MAN OF SIN, who has exalted himself above all that is called God, to censure all "as a Pack of *Knaves* and *Hypocrites*, who differ from him." I have not so learned *Christ*, as to sit in Judgment

on my Brethren, who may have taken the same Pains, and been every Way equally qualified with my self for finding out " the Truth, as it is in *Jesus*." You say ^a, " As far " as I know my own Heart and Conduct, I have taken all " the Methods you advise me to ^b, to know the Will of " God." I desire your self, and your Readers, to weigh what comes next: " *Nor will I say but others in contrary " Sentiments may have done the same;*" that is to say, " *they may have made the same Application to the Father " of Lights,*" with your self, " *join'd with the like sincere " Endeavours.*" May they so, Sir; why then should you dread to say, " that they may refresh themselves, equally " with Mr. P. C. with the chearful Hopes of a State of " perfect Light hereafter?" Why can you not give the same Encouragement to others that you take your self, whilst you think you embrace *the Truth, as it is in Jesus*? Can you think them as serious Enquirers after the *Truth, as it is in Jesus*, as *your self*? That they are as much led by the Spirit of God as *your self*? Not to say as great Criticks in the Languages, as capable of understanding the Strength of an Argument as *your self*? If so, " why must " you think them, who oppose the *Truth*, that is, *your " Notions*, to be guilty of a great Sin in their so doing?" May not *Arians*, in their Turn, think you " guilty of as " great Sin in opposing what they call the Truth?" And may not Christians on all sides, in so great, and, indeed, necessary Difference in Opinions, (whilst in this imperfect State) perpetually rant and bluster against one another for the same Reason? And bring their constant Accusations, against those who can't think and say as they do, for DENYING the Faith? or against those who have the same Notions with themselves, but care not to censure and vilify their dissenting Brethren for BETRAYING it? But what then? Would not Christian Churches become Cockpits, or Fencing Stages? This, indeed, hath made *Christianity* appear to Strangers and Enemies most unlike it self, than which (*truly so called*) nothing can be more calm, meek, and inoffensive. This arbitrary imposing Spirit (as Men grew weary of incessant Bickerings about the Faith) came to settle, at last, in one INFALLIBLE MONSTER. And this accursed Pride, this unrighteous lording over God's Heri-

^a Page 47. ^b p. 32.

tage, is the Quintessence of Popery; this supports the *Antichristian Throne*.

Vah Babylon! Babylon, proprio te robore servo.

While you imagine, "the same Honour done to *Falshood* and *Infidelity* that is only due to *Truth* and *Gospel Faith*," should you think as well of a learned, judicious, godly Divine, as you do of your self, though you and he can't see with the same Eyes; (to use your own Words ^a to Mr. N.) *I can't but tell you, that I pity you that you should not think a little more soberly of your self, and charitably of others.* If you conclude, "that all Difference must be taken away between *Truth* and *Error*, and the Scriptures render'd of little Service to Men's eternal Salvation," if you don't pronounce such guilty of a great Sin, as dare contest your Orthodoxy, whilst I continue a *Protestant*, I must think otherwise.

Papists and *Deists* are artfully hook'd in by you, as standing on the same Foot with *Arians*; and, Sir, if you can suppose the same of the former as¹ you do of the latter, namely, "that they may have taken all the Methods you have done to know the Will of God," what should hinder them from coming to the Knowledge of it, as well as you?

You tell me ^b, "As uncharitable as I would represent you, you have yet Charity to think, that though these are under very gross and dangerous Mistakes, yet many of them may be very sincere in their Errors: But think still, however, that this Plea of Sincerity may be over-ruled in the Day of Judgment, when any hold these Errors which God hath threaten'd with Condemnation." For my Part, I don't think it possible for a very sincere Person to hold these Errors, &c. but to say no more of that, your Resentment of my charging you with Uncharitableness, has, at last, brought you, it seems, to make a formal and solemn Profession of your CHARITY, to this Effect: That you do think "many who differ from you may be very sincere in their Errors, but, notwithstanding their great Sincerity, may be damn'd everlastingly.

You say, "the Reason why the *Jews* lay exposed to Condemnation, was not for want of being sincere in their

^a Page 39. of the Letter to him. ^b p. 41.

"Errors,

“ Errors, but because they might and should have thought better, and did not so carefully attend these *Evidences*, that God hath thought sufficient to over-rule and determine Persons to righter and better Sentiments.” But will you, can you, call that Man *sincere*, who may, and should, think better? who does not carefully attend *Evidences* sufficient for his Conviction? Must he be deem’d *sincere* who speaks or acts according to his *present* Sentiments, whether he came *sincerely* by these Sentiments or not? May not an *Hypocrite* act an hypocritical Part so long, till it becomes habitual, or (as we say) natural to him? May not some filthy Lust or other engage him, as to put on a *Mask* of Godliness at first, so to wear it so long that it becomes less painful and burdensom to him than it was; and what he did more awkwardly in the Beginning, he now pursues with greater Dexterity, though the same corrupt Principle, that made him take up with such a *Visard*, still remains? Will you say, that such a Wretch, of a *very Hypocrite*, is become, in Process of Time, *very sincere*, at least that he is so, whensoever he does not advert to his *Hypocrisy*? May he not forget his first Inducements to an external Profession of Sanctity? as some Liars have repeated a Forgery of their own Brains so often, till at length they believe it to be true themselves. Must the Pharisees consider themselves as Hypocrites in *every* Thing that Pride, Covetousness, &c. prompted them unto, to deserve such a Denomination from our Saviour? I believe a Person may be very zealous in the Assertion of those *Tenets*, which Ambition, Luxury, Worldliness at first help’d him to, and have since strongly riveted in his Mind; but a Zeal for such Opinions, (how much soever the Man may be in earnest) will, I think, instead of excusing, aggravate his Crime.

As your Notion of *Sincerity*, so likewise of *Hypocrisy*, appears to me very lame and defective, and, for any Thing I can yet see to the contrary, not corresponding with the Scripture Account. I allow *Sincerity* and *Hypocrisy* to be opposed to each other, but don’t think it sufficient to denominate a Man *sincere*, that he does not go against the *present Sense of his own Mind*; nor that he alone must be called an Hypocrite, whose Conscience tells him that very Moment, that he is acting a *treacherous* Part with God or Man. The Words, *Sincerity*, *Sincerely*, and *Sincere*, have as determinate Meanings as most, if not any Terms

in our *English* Tongue, and are always used in a good Sense ; so that I can't see of what Use your Expence of Learning is upon them. One who only understands his Mother Tongue, without the Assistance of *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Thucydides*, or the *Septuagint* in Greek, or the Words in the Original in the New Testament, without examining *Cicero*, *Livy*, *Virgil*, &c. knows what he means himself, and what others mean, whenever these Words are used. Does it follow, Sir, because *τελειότης*, *τελής*, may be taken either in a good or bad Sense, that therefore *Sincerity*, or *Sincere*, must be so too ? You have heard of a *complete* or *finis'd* Villain, but did you ever hear of a *sincere* Villain ?

The Words, you confess, are taken in a good Sense in the Bible, though they certainly amount to more than you say. 'Tis necessary, no doubt, " that Persons speak " and act without Fraud and Deceit, and according to the " real Sense of their Minds ; " if they have *antecedently* used their best Endeavours, with an humble and constant Dependence on divine Illumination, to come to a just Sense of Things, *that so they may speak and act without Fraud and Deceit*. A Man may first permit himself to be cheated by his wicked Heart ; he may let his unruly and exorbitant Passions impose on him ; and then may act under the Power of those Errors, which, at first, he very criminally gave into. Let me ask you, whether persecuting *Saul* was obliged to act *sincerely* ? Will you say, Yes ? Surely then he will be excused for that which he was obliged by the great God unto. Will you say, No ? I must then ask you another *wise* Question, as, perhaps, you'll ironically call it, *viz.* Whether he was obliged to act *hypocritically* ? I take this to be a *Dilemma*, that your Zeal against Errors hath needlessly entangled you in ; and you may assure your self, I shall not look on a meer Recital of my Words, with an *haughty Air*, in the room of an Answer to it.

I heartily wish (as well as you) " that there was more " *Honesty* and *Sincerity* both among Ministers and *Christians* ; " and still reflect, with Satisfaction, on the Liberty I took in that Sermon, (which, notwithstanding, gave you so great Offence for its Warmth) before the Assembly at *Exon* ; wherein I complained of divers others with the *Arians*, who could subscribe the Articles, and submit to the Liturgy, Ceremonies, and Discipline of the Church of

of England. As I thought it odd in Dr. Waterland, so I now do in you, to take Notice of *these* only, when Multitudes besides are equally obnoxious to the Charge of *Prevarication*. Why must one sort of Hereticks be pelted, and all the rest let alone? I wish I could say, there was no Defect of *Sincerity* in such Conduct. I abhor that *abominable Salvo*, as you very justly call it ^a, devised by Dr. Clark, and would earnestly entreat all such as have any Thoughts of entering the Pulpits of the *Non-Conformists*, rather to *part with their right Hands*, than employ them in a Subscription to something, to *any* Thing, (the most minute Punctilio) which is attended with the least Reluctance *from within*. A Person, methink, should find but little Comfort in his Ministry, when the Foundation of it has been laid upon *Lyes*. 'Tis to be presumed, our merciful Legislators will not give up any loyal Subjects to the Fury of merciless Ecclesiastics, for a Non-compliance with what they cannot conscientiously submit to; but whether they should or not, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*, Prov. x. 9.

But who, Sir, are they, ^b "that have attempted to put
" Persons out of conceit with what they own to be the
" great Truths of the Gospel, and to support a Cause
" which they acknowledge to be contrary to the sacred
" Scriptures?" General Accusations, you know, are none at all. If you design this as a Stricture on any of your Brethren, you should have intimated who they be, or where they dwell; but if you intend it only for some *Inhabitants in the Moon*, let them answer the Charges.

RECONCILERS may be very sincere Persons; but these you invidiously blend ^c with some of a different Character. I think, with you, "more *Sincerity* would be of signal
" Service to the World, and the Peace of the Church;" though the Term, as understood in your *imperfect Sense*, has terribly embroil'd the World and the Church, of which, you must confess, there are Instances too many to be here enumerated; for you'll own, there have been Multitudes of *Persecutors very sincere* in the midst of their *diabolical Fury*, as well as *Saul*. If you think such as *these* have done Service to the *World*, or the *Peace* of the *Church*, I can't but be of a different Opinion.

^a Page 56.

^b p. 42.

^c Ibid.

If "all, you think", that *Sincerity* mounts to is, that
 "Persons speak and act without Fraud and Deceit, and
 according to the real Sense of their Minds;" I'll appeal
 to your more cool and digested Thoughts, whether such a
Sincerity has not been very *mischievous* to Church, and
 State; and, were it not curb'd and restrain'd by necessary
 Laws, would appear yet far more prejudicial? Have not
 Duels been *sincerely* fought? Have not Purfes been *sincere-*
ly cut? Have not Murders been *sincerely* committed? Must
 you not think a Man *very sincere*, who demands your Mo-
 ney on the Highway, with a Pistol presented to your Breast,
 or violently enters your House at Midnight? The greatest
 Crimes that have ever been perpetrated, have been agree-
 able to the Purposes and Intentions of the Criminals. Will
 you suppose a Drunkard *insincere*, when he goes to the
 Tavern; or an *Adulterer*, that solliciteth his Neighbour's
 Chastity? May not an infamous Wretch have his Conscience
 with him, when perjuring himself in a Court of Justice
 for the good of his Wife and Children, as well as *Saul*,
 when he breath'd out Threatnings and Slaughter? May
 not the Conscience of such a Person as justly commend
 him, while he consults the Happiness of his Family, and
sincerely endeavours to leave them an Estate, which, by
 the Interposition of a false Oath, he can procure for them?
 The more *sincerely* corrupt Nature acts, the more and
 greater Abominations will be the Issue in all Places.
 St. James informs us, *James i. 15. When Lust hath con-*
ceived, it bringeth forth Sin. Divine Providence does,
 indeed, frequently strangle Lust in its Conception, and
 prevent the Sinner from bringing the *Embryo* to a perfect
 Birth. And 'tis, indeed, well, both for the World, and
 for the Church, when any Degrees of Shame, any Value
 for Reputation, any Baseness or Filthiness appearing in
Vices themselves, hinder the Ambitious, the Voluptuous,
 the Covetous, from acting *sincerely*, and executing what
 their several Passions so strongly prompt them to; 'tis well
 that Mens Lives, Estates, Wives, good Names, &c. are
 guarded, as they are, by Sanctions annex'd to human
 Edicts, without which, indeed, the forementioned Ob-
 structions would ordinarily be too feeble and unsuccessful.
 Would not young Heirs (doubtless, with great *Sincerity*
 in your Sense) apply the fatal Knife to the Throats of

their aged Parents? or sheath the bloody Sword in their Bowels? 'Tis, Sir, because the World acts in *Masquerade* so much as it does, that we find such Order, such a *Decorum*, as is yet observable in many Parts of it; because Men go against the *Bent* and *Inclination* of their corrupt Minds, and are forced to conceal their inward *Desires* and *Designs*, that there are not more Broils and Distractions in greater and smaller Societies; because *Adam's* Children are restrained from testifying a more perfect Agreement between their external Behaviour, and the *real Temper* of their Minds, that Villages, Towns, Cities, Nations, are not converted into *Aeldama's*.

You may, if you please, charge me with bantering *Sincerity*, (as you have done with bantering the *Faith*) and lament the *melancholy* Face of Things, when your *crude* Assertions are examined and exposed. But, notwithstanding your tragical Outcries, I'll as soon call him an *honest* Man, who *honestly* pays *John* for his Goods, with Money which he had *dishonestly* taken from *Peter*; as I'll suppose him *sincere*, who professes his Faith in any Thing, which either Sloth, or something *more Criminal*, has stak'd him down to a Compliance with, *antecedent* to a just and needful Reflection on the merits of the Cause.

You must excuse me, Sir, if I call that Inference, from the Signification of the Word [*Sincere*] a *daring* and *horrid* Assertion, viz. "That Persons may speak and act sincerely, whether they speak and act as God would have them, or not." I believe, whosoever speaks and acts *sincerely*, speaks and acts as God would have him; for otherwise I am under an absolute Necessity of supposing, that God would *sometimes* have Men speak and act *hypocritically*. I am aware that a *Papist* has a *Medium* at hand between *Sincerity* and *Hypocrisy*, viz. INFALLIBILITY; such a one may say, that Sincerity won't excuse a Man before God; and his making an humble Application to the God of all Wisdom, (conjoin'd with the Exercise of his rational Powers) won't bear him out in his Errors, while he refuses to submit himself to the Determinations of the *Catholick Church*: If you, Sir, can give your self Leave to talk in the same Strain, one may know where to find you.

Do you think that such, who are ^a "given up to such strong Delusions, as to believe a Lye, are sincere?" And "if they do very ill Things, (whilst under such unhappy Circumstances of Mind) they may be said, notwithstanding, to act *sincerely*?" If so, I can't see of what Use the Term can be to Christians, when it occurs in Pulpit Discourses, or practical Treatises, or what Purpose it can serve to press *Sincerity* with such Warmth and Copiousness, as Divines generally do; when, according to your Concessions, *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, effeminate, Abusers of themselves with Mankind, &c.* may possess it.

But (to make Things plain) you tell me ^b, " 'Tis not every sort of *Sincerity*, but a *godly Sincerity*, that must recommend us to God;" and ^c, "that our *Sincerity* may do us Service, it ought to be a *godly Sincerity*, or such a *Sincerity* as God doth require." So that you distinguish between *Sincerity* and *godly Sincerity*; such a Distinction (to serve a Turn) are you driven to, as neither *metaphysical Systems*, nor *sacred Writ*, nor yet *common Use*, will support you in. We find, indeed, once, and but once, the Epithet [*Godly*] prefix'd to *Sincerity* in our Translation of the Bible, viz. 2 Cor. i. 12. which, being in the Original *εὐκρίνεια το Θεῷ*, might have been render'd (perhaps more justly) by an usual *Hebraism*, *great Sincerity*. Do you know of any *Sincerity* towards God, or towards Man, which is not acceptable to the Almighty? Yes, you may say, a *Sincerity* in receiving those Doctrines as contained in the Holy Scriptures, which the sagacious, learned, impartial Mr. P. C. can't find to be in them, must needs be *unacceptable* to God; or a sincere Complaint of Mr. P. C. for his sentencing those to Damnation (as *Blasphemers* and *Idolaters*) without true Repentance, who dare oppose him in a certain Point of Theology, must be equally displeasing to the great Jehovah.

The poor *Arians* (against whom your long Harangue about *Sincerity* seems chiefly designed) are therefore in a very dismal Condition; for if they act like a Pack of *Knaves* and *Hypocrites*, and so curry Favour with Mr. P. C. or his Brethren, dissemble their Opinions, say they believe otherwise than they do, and pretend themselves to be *Orthodox*, when, at the Bottom, they are *Heterodox*, they

^a Page 45.^b P. 43.^c p. 48.

must expect their Portion with *Hypocrites*, in the *Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone*: But, if they freely assert their Opinions, (when they are condemn'd by the Holy Scriptures, that is to say, as these Scriptures are interpreted by Mr. P. C. and those plain honest Christians, that think as he does) and sincerely stand to their respective Sentiments; then (*unhappy Wretches!* as they are) they become equally inexcusable, and lay themselves open to everlasting Vengeance.

Your Citations from Dr. *Waterland*^a, are not a little surprizing, *viz.* "That our Business is not to consider the *Sincerity* of the Men, but the Nature, Quality and Tendency of the Doctrine." Is the Doctor willing to be responsible, at last, for the *Nature, Quality and Tendency* of all *his* Notions? Is it impossible for him to be mistaken (great and learned as he is) in any of his Inquiries into Truth? May not some Things, which he has, or, however, shall hereafter advance, differ, *in some sort*, from the Ideas in the divine Mind? The Doctor thinks, "We have nothing to do to enquire after Men's Sincerity, of which God is Judge;" though, for my Part, I believe, there's scarce any thing more common than this is. Men, who find themselves under a Necessity of being concerned with their Fellow Creatures, use to trouble their Heads about the *Sincerity* of such as they have some Commerce with, notwithstanding their Ignorance of their Hearts; they are not against forming the best Judgment, they are able, of the *Sincerity* of Men by their external Demeanor. I agree, with the Doctor, that "Ecclesiastical Judicatures do not go upon that Bottom," (something else besides the supposed Criminals *Sincerity* being examined into, to direct such Courts in their Process) but civil ones usually enquire into the *Sincerity* of the Person arraign'd. Whence otherwise comes it to pass, that the former *Characters* of such as are impeach'd have so great Weight, both with Judge and Jury, either for or against them? Why are Men so solicitous, on such Occasions, to muster up all they can possibly find to speak a good Word for them? Nay, is not a Friend in Court a proverbial Saying amongst us?

You "*dare not say for a World*"; that Heathens, as "*far as they are sincere, so far they are excusable, and excused.*" Dare you say this any more of *Christians*, or,

among these, of such as agree with you in the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, than of others? Will you declare, for a *World*, that any sincere Persons are excusable and excused in *Great Britain*, though they live and die (as undoubtedly they will) in gross Errors? If sincere Persons miscarry at last, we may well cry out, *Who then can be saved!* "If *Sincerity*, in a Judgment-Day, through the Merits of *Christ*, will not be accepted," what will become of all the fallible Sons of *Adam*? You'll say, a godly Sincerity will be accepted, but how can any one be satisfied he has *that*? If a Man sincerely applies to the Father of Lights for Direction, if he sincerely appeals to the Searcher of Hearts concerning his Integrity, *all this* (with you) avails nothing, unless he has also a godly Sincerity; when 'tis, at the same Time, impossible for him to know whether he has such a godly Sincerity, or not.

You say ^a, "If Persons are never so free from Prevarication and Hypocrisy, in holding Principles condemn'd by the Scriptures, and which naturally, and almost necessarily, lead to bad Practices, or sinful Omissions, they must unavoidably run a very great Hazard." But, Sir, this is a Supposition not to be supposed. A Person, free from Prevarication and Hypocrisy, will not hold *one Principle* which *himself* thinks condemn'd by the Scriptures. It may be, Mr. P. C. will say, the Scriptures condemn his Principles; but he has no more Reason to regard what Mr. P. C. says in this Case, than Mr. P. C. has to regard what another may say against himself in the same Case. In what a miserable Plight must all the Race of Mankind be, if the great Judge should pronounce Sentence upon them, according to the Sentences they now pronounce upon one another? If, hereafter, Christians and Infidels, Papists and Protestants, Orthodox and Hereticks, &c. must be treated according to their Interpretations of Scripture one for the other, or rather one against the other, I question whether there's an human Creature now in being that has not been anathematiz'd over and over, by some or other of the same Species with himself.

You ask ^b, "Whether it is not very plain, that Persons may miscarry, though sincere in *some* Things, for want of being sincere in *others*, that are equally necessary to *Salvation*?" And say, "When Persons are thus sincere in some Things, but act an hypocritical Part in others,

^a Page 48.^b p. 49.

" they

" they are neither excusable, nor may hope to be excused " in that awful Day," &c. To which I answer, according to your own Concession, that they shall not miscarry, because they are *sincere*, but because they are *not* ; though sincere (as you suppose) in some Things, yet for as much as they are hypocritical in others, they are not excusable ; so that 'tis not their *Sincerity*, but their *Hypocrisy*, that condemns them.

I never made *Heresy* (as you charge me ^a) the Subject of *Banter* and *Ridicule* ; I mean, *Heresy* in the Scripture Sense, as it consists in the culpable Defects of the Will and Affections express'd in a wicked Conversation, exclusive of *unavoidable* Errors in the Understanding. You here take Occasion to justify that Blunder I took Notice of ^b, and on which you founded an unrighteous Accusation ^c ; I then esteem'd it, as I still do, the Effect of mere *Oscitancy*. " The Words, *our Day*, (I suppose, it should " be, *in our Day*) were, you say, omitted in the Copy, " and over-look'd, till the Letter was gone abroad ; " and hereupon insinuate my Want of Candour. Let *the Words* be then inserted, " There have been none, that I know of, " *EVER* charged with *Heresy*, among Protestants, *in our Day*. " I'll appeal to my Readers, and yours too, whether a Person of the greatest *Candour* alive, could, without a Spirit of Divination, annex *the last Words* to compleat the Sense. You tell me, " They were our *own*, and not *farmer* " Times, that Mr. N. as a *Censor*, had in view, and that " it did concern you to regard. " But, Sir, do you imagine that the Expression, thus *corrected* and *amended*, strictly corresponds with Truth ? Has nothing, *in our Days*, been called *Heresy*, but *Socinianism* and *Arianism* ? Don't your self reckon *Pelagianism* to be such ? Strange Inadvertency ! Pray, what do you think of the famous Mr. *Dodwel's* late Notions about the Soul ? But what Occasion have I to single him out, in a Free-thinking Age, when, perhaps, there were never more peculiar, *out of the way* Speculations, which some or other, will, for that Reason, call *Heresies*, (since the Creation) than there are in the *present Times* ?

Your Charge against me ^d runs very high, where you tell me, that, " to ridicule Faith the more effectually, I " talk of Faith in *Diocesan Episcopacy*, *Pædobaptism*,"

^a Page 49. ^b p. 39, 40. of my first Letter, ^c p. 28.
of your first Letter to Mr. N. ^d p. 50.

&c.

&c. and gravely ask me, "Where the Scriptures ever speak in this loose and trifling, and bantering Manner concerning Faith?" I believe, as well as you, that *Christians are justified by Faith*; that Persons cannot please God without Faith; such, I mean, as are not under an Impossibility of arriving to it; nor do I think an unscriptural Faith is that through which Persons are said to be justified. But then I can't call that an unscriptural Faith, which I my self may not see to be in the Scripture, though another may, who has the same Right to use his Eyes that I have. A Faith in *Diocesan Episcopacy*, is, with many, a scriptural Faith; so is a Faith in *Believers Baptism*, as opposed to *Infant Baptism*, which latter many zealous *Antipedobaptists* have thought as great a Nullity, as you reckon the Faith of the *Arians* to be. What you say of Faith in the Deity of Christ and the Holy Ghost, may be said of the preceding Tenets, and indeed all others whatsoever: "It cannot cease to be the Duty of Christians to believe them, if they appear, to themselves, to be a Part of divine Revelation." There is, as you say, a *Profession of Faith* to be held fast without wavering, a *Mystery of Faith*, that we must hold in a pure Conscience, and of Faith, that must be earnestly contended for, &c. but, Sir, (whatever you may think to the contrary) these Expressions have as great Strength in the Lips of *Arians*, *Sabellians*, *Pelagians*, or any others that may seem to be at the greatest Distance from you, as they have in your own, or such as most exactly harmonize with you. "This Faith, you say, can be but one." Thus the *Papists* tell us, and, being infallibly sure they have it themselves, dare to hereticate all such as have it not.

"The Apostles, you say^a, might have been silent upon this Head, nor did they act any other than a weak Part, in exposing themselves to so much Hazard for the Faith of the Gospel; if the Faith of Persons be of such little Account with God, as I seem to make it." To this I say, if the Apostles had had no greater rational Assurance of the Truth of Christianity in general, than many Christians have, now a-days, of their own distinguishing Schemes in particular; if the Arguments and Proofs exhibited by them, had no stronger or more convincing Evidence in them, than those which are produced by the seve-

^a Page 50.

tal Sects or Divisions of Men in *Christendom*; for the Support of their peculiar Notions; if the former had been so entangled and embarrassed by *Jewish* or *Gentile* Opponents, as Persons of all Denominations among us are by one another; they must, I think, have acted a weaker Part than they did, by exposing themselves in such a Manner. 'Tis, alas! the great Folly and Mistake of Christians to imagine, that when any Opinion of their own is called in Question, the whole of Christianity is presently struck at, another Gospel is forthwith like to be introduced, and our Bibles are immediately discarded. Here *Deism* triumphs, when it has clogg'd any certain Principles held by Christians, as if Christianity it self were quite routed; and the Patrons of that Cause vainly conclude they have overthrown our holy Religion, if they can find a *Fallacy* in Mens Reasonings on *some Niceties*, in the Support whereof Christianity it self is not at all concerned.

You complain, *ironically*^a, of my "civil Way of speaking, (that one Thing is trifling, and another is silly.)" I love, Sir, to give Things their proper Epithets. Trifling Things I call *trifling*, and silly Things I call *silly*: But you may remember I also called some Things, I had met with in your Letter, *unjust*. This Animadversion on Mr. N.'s addressing a *Deist*, I might have given the last, as well as former Characters unto. I do not signify my self to be "even wiser than St. Paul," whom I am sorry to find you hooking in to defend so ridiculous a Remark. Please to mention the Place where you find him preaching *the Fall of Man, the Corruption of human Nature, &c.* to any, Learned or Unlearned, whom he had not brought first to the Belief of Christianity. The mean Appearance of our Saviour in his Life and Death, was, indeed, *to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks, Foolishness*; tho' the Inference you draw from hence, is not so very obvious, and what, indeed, would have surpriz'd me, had it come from another, *viz.* that "St. Paul did hereby signify to them their fallen, miserable, condemn'd State, utterly lost and undone without a crucified Christ to recover and save them." As fond as you are of vindicating *Saul's Sincerity before his Conversion*, you represent him in a very silly Dress *after it*. St. Paul preached

^a Page 51.

Christ and the Resurrection where-ever he went, having somewhat superior to human Reason, or Man's Wisdom, to rely upon, even those miraculous Operations, which, by the Power of the Spirit of God, he performed, though he was no Stranger to the Art of Reasoning: He knew how to address the Understandings, as well as the Passions of Men; and, if this be the only Text you have to produce that he preached the Things *revealed in Christianity*, before he had proved the *Truth* of it, you must "leave me to enjoy my own Opinion." I believe, you are the first of all Commentators, in any Age of the Christian Church, who have found the Fall of Man, and Degeneracy of the human Race, designedly insisted on by the great Apostle in *those* Words. An Illation so poorly founded, serves not only to make *Deists* laugh, but to force a Smile from *Christians* themselves. You tell me, "I don't justify, but rather condemn Mr. N.'s Method:" You should have told me *where* I do so, because I know nothing of it my self. "Evangelical Doctrines are, without Doubt, as you say ^a, bright and glorious Evidences of the great Excellency, Usefulness, and Necessity of the Christian Revelation; these shew it to be an Institution worthy of God," &c. And it must be owned they are an additional Confirmation of Christianity; but have not their Weight with an Infidel, who contesteth *Matter of Fact*. The Apostles therefore reason'd with the *Jews* from *Old Testament* Predictions, as clearly verified under the *New Testament*, and made their constant Appeals to *Moses* and the *Prophets*, with *Heathens*; they argued from the *Notoriety* of the Facts, and those mighty Signs and Wonders, whereby they proved the Truth of their Commission and Authority to preach a crucified Jesus, as the great Object of their Faith and Trust, in order to eternal Salvation, in Conjunction with a cordial Submission to his Laws.

"'Tis for this excellent Religion, and its great Doctrines ^b," that others contend, as well as you and your Brethren. You say, I cannot prove that "you have taken one Step condemn'd by Christianity, in your Defence of them:" But, Sir, Christianity does condemn your falling foul on others, perhaps on all Accounts as good as your selves, because their Thoughts are not thrown into the

^a Page 51.^b Ibid.

same Mould with your own. It requires you to receive those that are weak in the Faith, but not to doubtful Disputations ; by what Authority then do you reject them ? Perhaps you'll say, they are rejected, because they reject the Faith instead of being weak in it ; but you know, this may be as easily said, and with as good Grace, by them concerning you.

You tell me, in Dr. Waterland's Words^a, That "'tis giving way to childish Wrath to insinuate concerning my Brethren, that they had robb'd the Pope of his Infallibility, and arrogated it to themselves ;" and ask me, " whether any of our Brethren have been so bold and magisterial in their Assertions, as I and Mr. N. have been ? " I again ask you, whether Mr. N. or my self have any where censur'd grave, wise, holy, learned Men as a Pack of Blasphemers and Idolaters, and consequently in a damnable State ? I challenge you to quote the Expression, to refer to the Page where any Thing so hard, so censorious, has dropt from either of our Pens. I am not so silly, as to " charge you with Infallibility ; " but I charge you with a Conduct not to be justify'd on any other foot (if it may on that) but the Supposition of a Popish Infallibility.

The Citation from the learned Dr. makes but little Impression on me, who seems to forget that there was a Time, when the whole World was represented as wondering at it self for becoming Arian ; because he speaks of " all the greatest and wisest Men, that have liv'd in past Centuries, as Opposers of Arianism." Was there not one wise Man to be found in the World, whilst Arianism overspread it, or none, in the Dr's Opinion, but the learned Athanasius, (whose Name I would not be understood to use here by way of Contempt ?) Can it be thought in so many Arian Synods, as Ecclesiastical History mentions, all must be Fools ? " We may presume, as the Dr. says^b, without affecting to sit in the Seat of God, to think some very fallible Men liable to Errors." We may presume to think it, without any Breach of Charity, of the learned Dr. himself ; We may presume to think it of Mr. P. C. Nay, it may be presum'd of every Mortal. But what the Dr. means, by saying " when in Fact it appears that they are so, we may presume, according to our bounden

^a Page 32.^b Ibid.^c Duty,

"Duty, to take all proper Care to prevent such Errors spreading;" deserves farther Consideration. How does it appear to the Dr. that his Opposites are any whit more fallible than himself? Or why does it not equally appear to them, that the Dr. is as fallible as they are? And why must they not then take the same Care to prevent the spreading of the Dr's Errors, as he must take to prevent the spreading of theirs? Retortions of this Kind are natural; though I love not to hear Protestants talk in such a Manner.

As for Uniformity in *Opinion*, I think it impossible in the present State of Things. You say, you never heard of that Person that pleaded for it^a. But did you never hear of *Creeds, Confessions, Articles, Catechisms, &c.* compos'd by fallible Men for Hundreds and Thousands to subscribe; nay, for the whole World, if the *Authors* or *Imposers* could have had so extensive an Influence? Did you never hear of Goals, and Fines, and Faggots for some, that could not submit to certain Formularies of Faith? Have such as call themselves Protestants been wholly free from pressing an Uniformity, at least the *Profession* of an Uniformity in Principles? Some, indeed, have suggested an Expedient, which they would persuade themselves must make all *Sides* easy; viz. the confining our *Creeds, &c.* to Scripture Language, without the Intertexture of *Scholastick* Terms, or any *human* Deductions or Inferences. But this (plausible as it may seem at the first View) appears to me vain and impracticable, and equally adapted to support *Bigottry* and *Persecution*. For the Scripture Creed of an *Arian* would never please a *Trinitarian*, nor would a *Trinitarian's* Creed be digested by an *Arian*, though in Scripture-Language. The same may be said of *Calvinists* and *Pelagians, Pedobaptists* and *Anti-pedobaptists, &c.* who would mutually complain of an undue Combination of Texts to serve an *Hypothesis*, a culpable Omission of some Texts, and a perverse Application of others to support particular *Schemes*. Should therefore any such *Forms* be drawn up limited to Scripture Phrases, and impos'd promiscuously, Confusions and Distractions would necessarily arise in the Christian Church. For though Christians can readily receive the Writings of the Old and New Testament, as the infallible Rule of

^a Page 52.

Faith and Manners, (I consider not, at present, Interpolations suppos'd by Criticks, various Readings, &c.) yet they would not submit to their Brethren's culling out certain Texts, and placing them in such a Connexion and Dependence, as might betray an Attachment to some distinguishing Notions, and then exacting a Subscription to them.

But, Sir, notwithstanding all this, why may there not be an Uniformity in *Love* and *Affection* ? And seeing every one, as you say, should be fully persuaded in his own Mind ; why must they who stand or fall to one Master, rigidly insist on an Uniformity in Principle, in order to an Uniformity in Worship ? I cannot therefore be of the same Mind with such of my Brethren, as “ think it most “ for the Honour of God ^a, and most agreeable to all “ Principles of *Piety* and *Honesty*, that those who differ “ so widely, as *Arians*, and those who own the *Deity* of “ *Christ* and the *Holy Ghost*, should worship in *separate* “ *Assemblies*.” I cannot see that the widest Differences in Opinion among Christians, who profess a Subjection to the same common Lord, will justify an Exclusion of each other from the highest Acts of Christian Communion, whilst they walk, on *both* Sides, *soberly*, *righteously*, and *godly*. I agree with the late worthy Mr. *Bennet* in his *Irenicum*, who does not think it necessary for Christians to understand what is meant by three *Hypostases*, to state the Notion of a *Person* in the *Trinity*, or the Difference between *Person* and *Personality* ; what's meant by the eternal Generation of the Son, or Procession of the Holy Ghost. I'll crave leave to transcribe a little from *that Gentleman*, who has so happily express'd my own Thoughts in pag. 76, 77. of the above-mention'd Tract. “ 'Tis indeed Blasphemy against the divine Perfections, and the “ ready Way to tempt Men to reject all Revelation, whilst “ we represent God in his Word requiring of all, upon “ Pain of Damnation, what, with respect to great Multitudes, is quite out of their Power.

“ The same Remark, says he, may be apply'd to the “ Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as it has been a Subject of “ Dispute, and been stated in several and different “ Schemes. I cannot think it (the disputed Part) has the “ Importance of a Fundamental. Men may be equally

“ sincere, equally pious and good, and equally accepted
 “ of God, notwithstanding their different Sentiments in
 “ this Controversy : Nor is it plain enough to pass for a
 “ Fundamental, not easy enough to be understood, nor
 “ clearly enough reveal’d. Let any of our Schemists go
 “ through our Congregations, whether among Churchmen
 “ or Dissenters, with their Draught of this Doctrine, and
 “ a proper Number of Queries in their Hand relating to
 “ it ; and I am mistaken if they don’t find, upon En-
 “ quiry, by the Answers they’ll get, either that their
 “ Doctrine is not fundamental, or that the Generality,
 “ even of the *best Character* for Religion, are *no Chri-*
 “ *stians*. If some have learnt any Terms of Speaking,
 “ from Catechisms, Confessions, &c. that may pass with
 “ the Examiner for Orthodox ; yet if they have not *Ideas*
 “ and *Notions* answerable to them, (as I am confident is
 “ the Case with respect to many) only can repeat Words
 “ they understand not, they are no wiser than their Neigh-
 “ bours, who want the Knowledge of *their* Sounds. Let
 “ them, I say, make the Scrutiny in most Congregations
 “ in *England*, and I am afraid, if Understanding and
 “ Orthodoxy here be the Test of Christianity, we shall
 “ lose the Company of the best Part of our Communi-
 “ ties.”

“ In short, says he, I think it demonstrable, that there
 “ is no Scheme of the Doctrine of the Trinity (if we
 “ insert in it our Explications according to this or that
 “ Hypothesis) of that Importance, and which carries that
 “ Evidence in it, as justly to be accounted fundamental.

He then proceeds, in several Pages, to shew the Dif-
 ficulties which attend every Scheme the Learned have
 undertaken the Defence of. He says ^a, “ Dr. *Waterland*,
 “ who has employ’d so much Learning in Defence of the
 “ Doctrine of the Trinity, and generally writes with as
 “ much Distinctness and Perspicuity as most, yet is co-
 “ ver’d with Darkness here, and seems thrown into Con-
 “ fusion, in stating the Notion of *Person* ; which he doth
 “ so as to leave some Readers doubtful, whether he’s for
 “ the *numerical* or *specific* Unity of the three Persons.

“ The Subordination of the divine Persons ^b, he says,
 “ is a Matter as intricate and perplex as the rest. Ca-
 “ tholicism, says he ^c, is the certain and only possible

^a Page 89.

^b Ibid.

^c Page 99.

" Way of Union and Peace : 'Tis so, as on other Accounts, " so especially as it reduces Things to a Simplicity and " Plainness in which an Agreement is easy, and in which " *alone* it is attainable."

Such as refuse to receive Christians to Communion *as Christians*, I think worthy of Censure, while they reject such as belong to the same Household of Faith with themselves. If they with-hold from them the Children's Bread, when it does not appear the great Master of the Family would have it with-held ; if they forbid such from coming to *that Solemnity*, which has so remarkable a Tendency to promote Love and Peace, who are as circumspect in their Behaviour, as universally conscientious as themselves, they deserve to be blam'd. Must the *Lord's Supper*, which was originally design'd for *all* the Children of God, for *all* the Servants of Christ, be denied to any, who, in a Judgment of Charity, may be reckon'd fit for an Admission to it? 'Tis, Sir, because you are against such an Uniformity in *Affection*, and *Christian Communion*, that I charge you with *Imposition*, with weakening the Interest of *Nonconformity*, and exposing both *that*, and Christianity in general, to the Derision and Scorn of Infidels. 'Tis with great Regret, that I see Reason still to stand to those Expressions you have transcrib'd from p. 9, 10, 11. of my first Letter ; though I intended not what you cite from p. 14. for my Brethren, any more than for all others. Such a groundless Limitation of *general* Expressions shews an excessive Fondness for carping.

" What you say^a of my licking up Mr. *Peirce's* envenom'd " Spittle in his *Western Inquisition*, and throwing it afresh " in the Faces of his and his Friend's Opposers," seems to carry a Spice of Malice against both the *Dead* and the *Living*. 'Tis more than I know if one single Line of Mr. *Peirce's* can be found in my Letter, it being, at least, ten Years ago that I perus'd it. I have not, I'll assure you, nor any one for me, transcrib'd the smallest Fragment from it. I would gladly strengthen the Hands of all who are hearty in the Cause of Religion, whatever hard Lot they meet with from their Brethren. But pray what *Noise* and *Boasts* have I made about Catholick Charity, that appear to you *so inconsistent with my Complaints of others wanting it?* The great Design of my warm Pamphlet, as you call it, is, that less Regard may be paid, as you rightly observe,

^a Page 54.

to what is said against *Arianism*, and more Regard to that Meekness and Love, and those other Duties and Graces of Christianity, in Comparison whereof, Contentions about School Terms, and metaphysical Scuffles, are most insignificant. Pure and undefiled Religion, exemplified in the various Parts of our Conversation, is of a thousand times more Consequence, than having, or conceiving we have, right Ideas of those Things we would obtrude on our Neighbours. Imposers *have* been, and *will* be, on all Sides, while a fantastic Opinion of our Capacity to think for *others*, as well as our selves, prevails. *Only by Pride comes Contention.* *Arians*, as far as they act like Christians, won't find themselves mistaken if their *Scheme* loses Ground, provided that *Love* to God and *Man*, which is the fulfilling of the Law, abounds: Nor will Trinitarians, who have truly their Master's Interest at Heart, be grieved, though *their* Scheme loses Reputation, if practical Christianity again lifts up its Head, and the Life and Power of Godliness be revived. 'Tis no great Matter whether I or my Brother have the *rightest* Notions, or whether we have both *wrong* ones, while we can walk (Hand in Hand) to Heaven.

If Persons could but let one another alone in the quiet Enjoyment of their Sentiments, and acting according to the Dictates of their Consciences, what *Disturbance* could there be of the *Churches Peace*? You say, "We were" quiet and harmonious before *Arianism* sprung up. Was not also the Catholick Church quiet and harmonious before *Lutheranism* and *Calvinism* sprung up? The *Spanish* Inquisition makes *all* quiet at present, and hinders those *new Fires*, which, in all Likelihood, would be kindled otherwise. When *Error* and *Scepticism* so abounded in the World, the *holy Fathers* thought it needful to quench the Flames that were kindling, and therefore now and then made a Fire for Hereticks, to prevent their setting the whole Church on Fire. The Method which these Gentlemen take I heartily explode; yet confess my Sermon was designed (as are also my Letters) to give fresh Life to that *Flame* of Christian Charity, which has been *expiring* amongst us. I encourage none to withdraw from their Ministers, or their Fellow Christians, who are satisfied with them.

'Tis none of my Business to apologize for our late *Renegades*, but I well know the Impositions among us *Dissenters*

ters are frequently mentioned by them, and are the most popular Topick, they urge, to blacken those whom they have left, and defend their own Behaviour.

I lament, with you, " a Decay of that eminent Piety, " and Strictness of Manners, that there was among our *famous Predecessors*." This, in Part, may be owing to that great Zeal employ'd on the nicer and more difficult Parts of Controversy, instead of a Zeal for practical Holiness.

You say, you never encouraged Ministers who were not *sound in the Faith*; so far the *Romish Church* will go along with you, who never encouraged any *Hereticks*. An Indifference " as to Faith, as express'd by a strict " *Conversation*, will, to be sure, sink the Dissenting Interest," but a *Liberty* granted to others (which we are always willing to take our selves) of believing as the Bible directs, and professing our Belief on proper Occasions, is *essential* to Non-Conformity.

You express your self very cautiously ^a, when you say, that " you don't know that any Man ever suffer'd *unjustly* " in his Person, Reputation, or temporal Interests, by " you or your Friends." The Persecutors in the Reign of *Charles the Second* would have said the same; nay, the bloodiest *Papists* that ever breath'd, *viz.* that none have ever suffer'd *UNJUSTLY* by them. As for your self, you are, at present, an *Individuum Vagum*, assuming the borrowed Letters of *P. C.* which are not, that I can find, the beginning of any Dissenting Minister's Name in the *West*. But a Person of eminent Piety, and ministerial Abilities, who declares himself in the commonly-received Doctrine of the Trinity, hath (as I am certainly informed) suffer'd in his Reputation and Interest, by very unjust Representations of the Reverend Mr. *John Enty*, the Particulars of which Charge shall be faithfully laid before the World, if demanded. I mention not this as the only Instance of unfair Dealing, for *others*, besides the Gentleman just named, are chargeable with the same. 'Tis possible, you allow, " that a Person may suffer some " Inconveniencies on the Account of his Principles." 'Tis possible, indeed, he may, but 'tis *pitiful* and *scandalous* that he should from his Brethren, when their own Principles make them so obnoxious to the civil Powers. Some,

as you say, have suffer'd by turning *Papists*, or *Nonjurors*, *i. e.* professed Enemies to the Prince, under whose Protection they live ; others have suffer'd by becoming *vicious*, and so have *justly* suffer'd an Expulsion from their Pulpits. Congregations may, doubtless, desert those, whose Conversation, Preaching, Principles, they cannot, on a serious Examination of Things, be satisfied with ; People having an unalienable Right to choose, and refuse their Ministers. However, *they* must take heed that they be not influenced by any peevish Humours, Pride, Caprice, &c. in receiving or rejecting any ; nor prevail'd upon to exercise an implicit Faith in the Exclusion or Condemnation of those, whose Ministry they had, in Years past, with Profit and Comfort attended upon ; and who still retaining an unexceptionable Character, (as far as the Infirmities of this mortal State will admit) might continue to be heard with the same Pleasure and Advantage, if the loud Exclamations and Censures of their angry Brethren had not forbidden it. Too many are exceeding busy in keeping their Neighbours Vineyards. Were such a pragmatical Temper more curb'd by those who find it so predominant in themselves, we might expect a greater Harmony in our *Israel*. If, instead of giving such Advice (*whether solicited or not*) as tended to the Defamation of *wise* and *good* Men, such only were given as served to disgrace and disparage *Wickedness* ; the Case would be very different from what it has been in *all* Ages, and is too much in the *present* one. A *fallible* Man, in other Things, may be *infallibly* certain, that Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Swearing, Theft, Murder, &c. are Sins : These are *uncontested* Heresies. But they who are for bearing hard upon Men of equal Sense, Conscience, Learning with themselves, and representing them to any of *their own* Flocks, as Persons not fit to be trusted in the Concernments of their Souls, or defaming them abroad, and thereby preventing their more extensive Usefulness, act an unrighteous Part, and do not unto their Brethren, as they would be willing to be served themselves. Private Christians, when they find their Ministers in earnest pursuing the great Ends of their Office, would not easily suspect them as Depravers of the Faith, Corrupters of the Worship, and Obstructors of the Holiness of their People, did not officious Meddlers exasperate them, and fill them with unreasonable Prejudices against such as before they loved

K

and

and valued. A celebrated Prelate, in Queen *Elizabeth's* Days, being desired to appear in Favour of the *Puritans*, declared he could see no more Reason for the Toleration of such, than of *Arians*, or *Anabaptists*, or any other Hereticks. The *Puritans* being Enemies to the *Discipline*, and of Course to a material Part of the *Doctrine* of the Church, ought to be discouraged, as much as other Disturbers of the Churches Peace. This Reasoning seems, to me, very conclusive; I can't possibly see where we shall stop, nor why *all* sorts of Hereticks (or Persons unsound in the Faith) must not be censured, as well as *some*.

You say ^a, " Whatever any one suffers by this Means, (*i. e.* by acting according to his Conscience) he hath done himself the Injury, and been the Author of all these Inconveniencies; and can't charge it as Persecution upon his People, or any that they think fit to advise with about such an Affair." Let me entreat you, Sir, to put your self in the Room of such a Sufferer. Suppose your own People, to whom you statedly minister, should alter their Notions about the *Trinity*, and be so censorious as to charge you with depraving their Faith, corrupting their Worship, and, pursuant to the Advice given by some neighbouring *Arian* Divines, should abandon you, because you could not, without offering Violence to your Understanding, declare your Approbation of their *present* Sentiments; would you think you had *only* done your self the Injury, and been the *sole* Author of all the Inconveniencies which might arise to your Family from such an Ejection?

You renew your Complaint of Mr. N's Reflections on the Assembly ^b; but, in my Opinion, *your supposing* the " plainest Symptoms of personal Charges to be carried in " some of his Expressions," tends more to the disgracing *some Members* in the Assembly, than all that he had said. Should *common* Prostitutes be smartly exposed, before an Assembly of *chaste Matrons*, by an ingenious Declaimer; and a certain Stander-by catching at some very ill Things, which the Orator had accused *infamous Strumpets* of, should hereupon complain, that the *modest Ladies* were abused, and zealously undertake their Defense, when none of them all had been personally charged with any Crime; I'll farther suppose, that *two* or *three*, in such an

^a Page 48.

^b Ibid.

Assembly, should have had their Characters a little sullied; would such a warm Advocate do *them* any Service by asserting, that the Author of the Declamation did, and must mean *them*, and designed his malignant Satyr against *them only*, though his Expressions were general?

You tell me ^a, " Though I think fit to justify Mr. N. " you can't easily suppose, but both I and he would have " thought it very hard and very unbecoming to be thus " insulted in our own Pulpits." The Pulpit Mr. N. and my self were desired to preach in, by our Brethren, must be look'd upon as *our own* for that Time, being assigned us, at such a Juncture, not to occupy it for those only who stately minister'd in it, or those who attended on their Ministrations, but to address our selves to the united Ministers of *Devon and Cornwall*, as well as many of different Congregations, who are usually found in such promiscuous Assemblies on publick Occasions. But, however that be, 'tis well known, that one of the Ministers who constantly officiates in that Pulpit, gave *us, both*, his *publick* Thanks for our Services in it; so that this Stricture might have been well enough spared.

You complain ^b of *Rage and Raillery*, as you did, more than once, in your first Letter; but " still, you say, your " Brethren have this to support them under all, that *he* " *that judgeth them is the Lord.*" But mayn't such as have been charged with *Blasphemy, Idolatry, undermining Christianity*, &c. with as great Reason apply this Text to themselves, and esteem it *a very small Thing to be judged of Man's Judgment*?

Sir, I am not mistaken in " charging you, as engrossing " all Wisdom and Goodness to your self, and those who " think and speak according to your Mind, as you intimate " me to be ^c," unless your Words are bare Sounds, without any *Ideas* annex'd to them. Mr. Nation's Expression differs *very much* from yours. Do you take [*I do promise my self*] and [*'tis most certain*] to be synonymous, and of equal Force? I may say, that *I do promise my self* Mr. P. C. will kindly receive this Letter, which I now send him, and give me his hearty Thanks for my Trouble; but I can't therefore say, *'tis most certain* that he will. Can you produce one Instance where the Term *ALL* is used, in profane or sacred Writings, to signify *very many*, when

^a Page 58.

^b p. 59.

^c Ib'id.

the Words, MOST CERTAIN, or something equivalent, are prefixed to it? Your positive Assertion appears therefore, to me, with as *ill a Grace*, after this *very mean* Defense of it, as it did at the first reading.

You transcribe a Letter signed, as you say, by several of the *first Rank*, to confront that of my *Correspondent's*; I shall therefore make a few Remarks upon it.

I congratulate the Gentlemen on the "*very valuable Blessing* that Dissenters, from the national Establishment, enjoy, who have Pastors chosen by themselves, and such as recommend practical Religion, both by their Examples and Preaching;" but can't so well approve of the imperfect Manner wherein they express themselves towards the Close: "As in the Choice of our Ministers^a, (ever since the *Arian* Controversy broke out among us) we have had *nothing more at Heart* than the electing such for our Pastors, who gave us Satisfaction of their soundness in the Doctrine of the Trinity, and Assurance of defending it; so there is *nothing hath more endeared you to us*, than your Defense thereof." They must give me leave to tell them, that a Profession of Faith in the Doctrine of the Trinity, is not the *chief Thing* that should determine Persons in their Choice of Ministers: Were it so, the *Jesuits* themselves would lay as just a Claim to our Pulpits, as any of us all. Surely *something more should be laid to Heart*, than a Declaration of *Orthodoxy* in *this* Point. Not that I would insinuate as if any of those whom they have elected for their Pastors, were defective in any other Qualifications (whether intellectual or moral) however must inform them, that the Compliment they pass upon them carries in it a greater Reproach, than was, to be sure, intended. What, is there *nothing* to be found by these Gentlemen in their Ministers, that hath *more endear'd* them to themselves, than what will, at the same Time, endear to them as great *Villains*, as, perhaps, can be found under the Heavens? Not that I think the worse of the Doctrine of the Trinity, because *very bad* Men profess their Faith in it; but to represent that as the most endearing Accomplishment in a Man, which the most profligate and abandon'd have *in common* with himself, and to esteem *that* to be his *BEST*, which *equally* belongs to the *worst*, is a severe Reflection (though the

contrary was, doubtless, designed.) Whatever claims a superior Regard or Esteem (consider'd abstractedly from other Motives) must be something which will *distinguish* a Person from all *wicked* Men; wherefore I am concerned to find such, who would testify their Respect to their Ministers, disgracing them by *crude* and careless Expressions; but am the more confirm'd in the Fitness of that Advice which Mr. N. gives^a, though they (as well as you) are so angry with it. For if Persons of *their unblemish'd Character* lay so great and unjustifiable Strefs on a Speculation in Divinity, and are so *dogmatical*, in something which has perplex'd the Theories of some among the *best* and *wisest*; I see just Reason to warn Men of *loose and vicious Conversations*, not to imagine that their *supposed* regular Heads will make an Atonement for the *certain* Irregularities of their Lives. Their challenging Mr. N.^b is very awkward, who may sufficiently silence their Clamours on this Head, if he produces a *single Instance*; whereas they can't certainly be such Strangers in the World, as to be ignorant, that not only our Taverns, our Ale-houses, our Streets, but our religious Assemblies, will justify such an Address to his Brethren. There are too many who constantly attend on our Ministry, who have other Faults, besides *secret* ones, to be cleansed from. The scandalous Behaviour of not a few who separate from the national Constitution, hath expos'd us (their Instructors) as well as themselves, to Contempt. Indeed, they *artfully* confine their Challenge to the *Members* that belong to our Societies, but these they know to be (alas!) by far the smallest Number of our Hearers; though I wish 'twere universally unexceptionable, even as to *such*. For my Part, I'll venture to charge every Individual that lives in a Course of Sin, how constant soever his Attendance be on publick Ordinances, with those atheistical Principles, (whether he owns them or not) which Mr. N. hath so faithfully and seasonably requested his Fellow Servants to bear their Testimony against.

The Witness these Gentlemen bear, that the "scandalous Reflections, (as they are call'd^c) are false, "unjust, and groundless, if not malicious," will not pass with every one. Mr. N. and I, and many others, may

^a Page 36. of his Sermon.
Vindication.

^b p. 60.

^c p. 27. of the

think those Contests fruitless and vexatious, which they may suppose useful ; and those Censures very uncharitable, which they may call very just and expedient.

They may resent, as highly as they please, the Representation made in the Letter mention'd *p.* 29, 30. of my *Vindication*, though what they chiefly take Notice of deserves the least Consideration ; namely, the Number of *rich* Men who approv'd of the Sermon. The wealthy Part of Mankind is very small, compar'd with the poorer sort ; if then we separate the Profane and Irreligious from the Good, amongst the Men of Wealth, their Number will be exceeding scanty, especially of such who think fit to patronize the Dissenting Interest, by their Attendance on our Assemblies. However, among these, I am credibly inform'd, there is such a Plurality, as will clear the Author of that Letter from the Imputation of Falshood.

They say, ^a " If any might thank him, we doubt not it " was because they were not appriz'd of the Tendency of " the Sermon to cast Reproaches on our Ministers, or " they would have resented it as much as others." But why can't they suppose their Neighbours to be as good Judges of Sermons as themselves ? 'Twas, doubtless, because they saw no ill Tendency in the Sermon, but, contrariwise, a very good one, that some both *wise* and *good* Men gave Mr. N. thanks for it.

They (as well as *you*) charge me with " attempting to " sow Divisions among both Ministers and People ^b". To which I answer, I as little desire to disturb the Peace of other Men's Congregations, as I do to have that disturb'd to which I belong. The Case stands thus.

Mr. N. preaches an honest, serious, practical Sermon, before an Assembly of Dissenting Ministers in *Exon*, amongst whom, some thank'd him, and others refus'd it. Of those that scrupled to give him Thanks, Mr. P. C. (it seems) was one. Mr. N. (as a Man arraign'd might do very innocently) labours to defend himself, by printing his Sermon, with a short Preface. Mr. P. C. sets himself (though with *great Reluctance*) to expose both Preface and Sermon, and accordingly finds what many a common, nay, (I believe) many an *eagle-ey'd* Examiner would never have hit on. He sees, with Indignation, many " wicked *Innuendoes* against the ever-

^a Page 61.

^b P. 60.

" *bleſſed Trinity* ; our Miniſtry ſlighted, unſcriptural
 " Terms of Lay-Communion made light of, the groſs A-
 " bominations of the Church of *Rome* repreſented as in-
 " different Things ; not only all Proteſtant Diſſenters,
 " but the whole Reformation condemned ; the Deity of
 " Chriſt and the Holy Spirit thrown up without one Strug-
 " gle for it ; the Chriſtian Faith repreſented as a mere
 " Name, or rather a Nullity ; our People unjuſtly reproach-
 " ed, baſely and wickedly charged ; the Pulpit prostituted,
 " converted into a Stage, and made a Place of *Raillery* ;
 " *Blasphemy* and *Idolatriy* excus'd, if not defended ; be-
 " ſides divers Blunders and Scraps of Nonſenſe interſpersed. I,
 who had openly given Thanks for ſuch a *weak* and *wretched*
 Performance, muſt needs conclude my ſelf, as well as the
 reſt of my Brethren, with whom I concurr'd, Sharers in
 Mr. N's. Guilt ; eſpecially when Mr. P. C. had aſſur'd
 us, that the Preacher hereby funk his Character with *all*
wiſe and *good* Men ; ſo that whoever dar'd to think or
 ſpeak well of it, muſt be either a *Knave* or a *Fool*. Where-
 upon, I gave ſuch an obnoxious Diſcourſe a ſerious Review,
 and, upon a freſh Peruſal of it, obſerv'd it not only to be
 more innocent than the Animadverſer had repreſented it,
 but conceiv'd the ſame good Opinion I had entertain'd of
 it, when deliver'd from the Pulpit ; and therefore laid
 hold on ſome vacant Hours for its Vindication, finding
 my own and Brethrens Reputation and Uſefulneſs, as well
 as Mr. N's. concern'd herein. So that I am to be conſi-
 der'd as wholly on the DEFENSIVE.

The moſt unkind Motion, which you ſay ^a, I have made
 to the Diſſenters of *Exon*, to leave their Miniſters, is a
moſt unkind Miſrepresentation of your own. Pray mention
 the *Page* where I have dropt any Word of this Nature,
 or retract ſo falſe an Accuſation.

The Defenſes that have been made by ſome forward
 Perſons (who perhaps may think more highly of their
 Abilities in Controverſy, than their Neighbours do) are
 ſtill, in my Opinion, weak and poor. Many Arguments
 offer'd in Behalf of the Trinity, by ſuch whoſe Zeal may
 exceed their Light, have appear'd to me *inconcluſive*.
 The ready way to propagate Notions, whether Truths or
 Errors, is warmly to oppoſe them. By this Method have
 many Heretics (as they are ſtil'd) been forc'd out of their

Obscurity, receiv'd Strength and Vigour, and made their Way through the World ; which had they been neglected, would probably have soon expir'd.

'Tis to me demonstrable, that *Arianism* hath increased in the West by the Opposition given to it. For to do the *Arians* Justice, they are not only *tenacious* of their Notions, but have very *plausibly* defended them ; and having, on their Side, the *Advantage* that commonly attends Sufferers for their Principles, I mean, that of Pity and Compassion from Stranders-by (who have had the Curiosity to examine their Writings, and enquire whether the Men are as bad as they are painted by their Adversaries, but, finding the contrary, have many of them embraced the same *Heresy*) ground has been gain'd by them in several Places, and *Arianism* has many *open* Friends under the *Noses* of its most angry Opponents. It appears to have, at this present Time, more Adherents in *Devon*, in Proportion, than in other Counties ; for there are several Congregations *here* which pass under the Name of *Arian*, and whose Pastors own themselves to be in the *new Scheme*. This you may call, if you please, a *Falsity in Fact* ; and tell me, that, since the late Controversy, there are no more *Arians*, in the *West*, than there were before, and that my *poor Intelligence* hath misled me. But, you say, " If you should be mistaken, I, and such as I, may thank our selves, that we have given it so much Countenance and Encouragement ^a." Sir, I am for giving every *honest* and *sincere* Christian what Countenance and Encouragement I am able, though, for so doing, I should be charged with *Disbonesty* and *Insincerity* my self. You " *wish* that I, and several others, mayn't have given too much Occasion to the open Abettors of *Arianism*, to think that 'tis nothing but *Fear* that keeps us from joining with them." Your ill-natured *Wishes* are ready before they are called for : If *Fear* would keep us from joining with them, why does it not also keep us from speaking for them ? because *even this*, you know, has been severely censured, as well as the former.

I charge you with a flat Contradiction, as you observe^b ; and how have you discharged your self from it ? I own, there's not any Contradiction in saying, that " the stedfast Adherence of the Assembly to the Doctrine to the Tri-

^a Page 63.

^b p. 65.

“ nity is the chief Occasion of your undertaking their
 “ Defence ; or, that such an Assembly deserves no Blame,
 “ for that great and steady Concern that they have always
 “ manifested for this Doctrine.” Pray, be pleased to look
 over, once more, the Title Page of your Letter to Mr. N.
 with the second Paragraph in it, and you may, on farther
 Observation, see a perfect Contradiction, as well as my
 self. The Title Page asserts the Letter to be written in
Defence of the Assembly of the united Ministers of Devon
and Cornwall, for not giving Thanks for the Sermon
preached Sept. 8, 1731. But this Paragraph asserts, that
the Defence of the Assembly is the least Part of your Con-
cern ; and the chief Occasion of the Letter is, the Vindi-
cation of the eternal Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, the
Vindication of the Faith against growing Errors, &c. So
 that you do not make the *Defence of the Assembly*, and
 the *Defence of the Deity of the Son, &c.* to be coinci-
 dent, but set them plainly, in *contradistinction*; one to the
 other.

The Time for that Advice which Mr. N. gave his Bre-
 thren, as well as the Advice it self, appear to me not a
 whit the more improper for your Complaints ^a of his gi-
 ving a loose to his Passions, and scattering his causeless Re-
 flections. How could he think his groundless Calumnies
 should affect the Innocent ? or that his general Censures and
 Dissuaves should be prejudicial to any, whose known Cha-
 racters, as well as Consciences, would be their Protection ?
 He did not, and indeed he could not say, that none were
 worthy of Blame, it being absolutely impossible for an un-
 inspired Person to pronounce such a Sentence of Absolution
 on the most perfect Assembly of Ministers or Christians on
 Earth. But he modestly says ^b, *I do not charge any here*
with these Things. If the Interest of Christ may be best
 advanced by the denial of all Ungodliness, and worldly
 Lusts ; if Harmony and Concord with one another may be
 promoted, by dropping Disputes about Things, which have
 caused Strife and Contention in the Churches of Christ,
 nay, cannot be promoted without it ; if the way to
 strengthen each others Hands against the common Ene-
 mies of all Religion, and Christianity in particular, be for

^a Page 65.

^b p. 53. of Sermon.

Christians themselves to lay aside their Party Quarrels, and (instead of stigmatizing one another with reproachful Names) to unite against their known Adversaries; I must then think the Discourse it self very seasonable, and calculated for the Auditory.

"No Time can be *suitable* to sow Seeds of Strife and "Discord, and to set us at Variance with one another;" and forasmuch as you dare not say Mr. N. had any Design to do so, you had better omit any Insinuations of that Nature. You say, "Though I think that his Sermon was "so manifestly calculated to promote Peace, you hope you "may be allowed also to think with the *most*, that it had, "much rather, a Tendency to promote *Animosities* and "*Contentions*." You here speak with a little more Caution than you did in your first Letter, using the Term [*most*] instead of [*all*]; though, in the qualified Manner you *now* express your self, 'tis more than you are able to defend, unless by the *most*, you mean the most that you are intimately conversant with, who, perhaps, may choose your Friends and Acquaintance with greater Discretion and Wariness than Mr. N. does his; for otherwise 'tis more than you can know, that the *most* think as you do. The seasonable Caution given him^b (whether by one of Mr. P. C's Confidants, or some other, I can't say, having heard nothing of it before, nor is it material to enquire) was, it seems, to no Purpose; but (bold and daring as he was) he persisted in his Design, as the Event shews, and had not only the Insolence to *preach* a Sermon without Mr. P. C's previous Approbation, but also to *print* it, (which was yet worse) after *he* had condemn'd it.

You complain of the Preacher, once and again, that "he did not keep to his Text, and do his best to promote "practical Christianity." Pray, Sir, how would you have had him manage his Text? Did he not explain what is meant by denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, by living soberly, righteously, and godlily? Did he not shew that the Gospel Dispensation teaches all Men so to do? Were not his Remarks on *Deists* just? Was not his Application, both to Ministers and People, proper and seasonable? Was not the whole Discourse apparently subservient to practical Godliness? Can you produce any single Pas-

^a Page 60.

^b p. 66.

sage in it justly referable to a different Design? Was it not very natural, from the Subject he handled, to warn his Auditory against unnecessary Controversies? He might not, perhaps, say some Things that you would have said; nor, it may be, would you have said some Things that he thought fit to say: But what then? Must Ministers be turn'd into *Momus's*, and set every Expression on the Rack? Or, should they not rather give, even obnoxious Passages, the softest and mildest Constructions? Should they not consider themselves subject to like Passions and Infirmities with others? Where, Sir, has Mr. N. "contended earnestly and odly (as a Bigot) against the Faith, or for those that oppose it? You should, you say, be glad if he would endeavour to be a little more consistent, than to look one Way, and row another." Don't you find Fault with St. *Paul* for his Inconsistency in becoming all Things to all Men? for his Regard of those who differ'd from him, instead of censuring them? Was he consistent with himself in persuading Christians to *bear with one another*, when 'twas impossible for both Sides to be in the right? And, as an infallible Apostle, he could have decided the Quarrel betwixt them far more easily, than Mr. P. C. can the Controversy betwixt the *Trinitarians*, and their Opposites.

Mr. N. however, is unrighteously charged with "supporting and countenancing those who deny Faith in Christ, as their God and Saviour." Let it be proved upon him that he has supported and countenanced either DEISTS, or JEWS, TURKS, or PAGANS. But if you mean *Arians*, these, to a Man, profess their Faith in *Christ*, as their God and Saviour, though I can't observe any uncommon Warmth exerted in this Sermon for them; nor can I find any run-down by him for defending his own Faith.

You have a learned Dissertation upon *Hades*^a, and wonder I should pretend to vindicate Mr. N. who, you say, makes the *Elysian Fields*, and the imaginary Torments of *Hades*, to be opposite to each other. But does such an Opposition appear? or can it be necessarily infer'd from Mr. N's Words? Take any other Sentence, where the manner of Expression is parallel to his, and see whe-

^a Page 63, 64.

ther the Sense won't run smoothly and obviously enough without supposing any Opposition. For Instance: " Sinners will not amend their Lives, whether Ministers tell them of *unconceivable Blessedness*, or of the *certain Torments of a future State*." Is it repugnant to any Rules of Grammar, or the common Way of speaking, to refer future State to Blessedness, as well as Torments? Or, suppose Grammar and common Speech should remonstrate against this, where is the Absurdity to say, *the certain Torments of a future State*, without such a Reference of future State to the former Clause? forasmuch as the Words are comprehensive of *both Happiness and Misery*. Suppose I ask Men, in the Pulpit, whether they believe there's a glorious Heaven; or the dreadful Miseries of the *next World*; would this be Nonsense? I could not, indeed, be certain how Mr. N. understood *Hades*, but I knew the Expression was defensible from the Charge of a Blunder, whether the Term were taken in a more *restrained*, or *extensive* Sense. I therefore call *this very gentle Stricture* on Mr. N. (as you stile it) a boyish Cavilling. However, give me leave to observe, that of the *several Stings* I have pluck'd out of the Tail of your Letter, this is the only one you have undertaken to vindicate: How poorly, let the Reader judge. The rest you have huddled up together in the Conclusion of your last, leaving them all to shift for themselves, as well as they can, not offering a Tittle in their Vindication; though my Remarks on them were such, as might be thought sufficient to incite a more calm and dispassionate Person than you seem to be, to say somewhat for himself in answer to them, if he were able.

You know I had ask'd you, whether you would *sacrifice a considerable Part of your Bible, to the Drollery and Buffoonery of Atheists and Infidels*? I had charged you with making a *Remark, which must either expose your Bible, or your self, to Contempt*, on the Occasion of your insulting Mr. N. about his Title Page. I defended his calling the heavenly Blessedness, &c. a PLACE, and complained of a *vain and wrangling Captiousness*; his speaking, as he does, about the Sacraments I justified, by asking you a close Question or two; I told you he did not make the Gospel Dispensation, consider'd abstractly, to consist of two Precepts. But what I am even startled at,

Is your repeating that Saying of his in your present Letter to me, without taking the least Notice of the Author's Correction of the Press, by the Insertion of a *Comma*, viz. *Evangelical Holiness is in order to, a Meetness for the heavenly Blessedness*. Half the Candour which you wanted in me to excuse a remarkable Blunder of your own, (when you would have had me supply from your Copy, (which I never saw) a very imperfect Sentence, and which remain'd as imperfect with such a Supply, as 'twas before) I say, half that Candour might have directed you to a *Comma*, without Mr. N's, or my Intimation. But, when both of us had endeavour'd to rectify your Mistake, the charging him afresh with it, (as one of those Things that want a Vindication) admits of no Apology.

Whether *you envy me the Pleasure of my Performance*, or not, I must tell you, that I consider it as a stronger Defence of Mr. N. than I took it at first to be, and, with fresh Assurance, demand your Retraction of what you find your self incapable of supporting, especially considering the Character and Usefulness of the Person, whom you calumniate so unjustly, are concern'd therein.

When so many Things are quite over-look'd, when others have such feeble and trifling Remarks made on them, and others have nothing but a *naked Recital*; I am rather tempted to express some new Satisfaction in my late Letter to your self, than to discover any Uneasiness at *what* I have written, or *what* you have answer'd to it.

You manifest a vehement *Itch* to find out the Faults of others, with as great an unwillingness to confess your own; though, for what I can yet descry in your Performances, neither Mr. Nation or my self have any great Reason to be afraid of such an Assailant.

After all, I must inform my Readers, that I should not have taken half the Freedom with some others, that I have used with Mr. P. C. nor would I undertake the Defence of my present Method in writing, were I concern'd with a *fair, modest, and candid* Adversary. I can, at any Time, pass by a Piece of *good-natured* Nonsense, nor do I love to torture a *well-meant* Absurdity. But, when a boisterous huffing Antagonist enters the Field, and employs his despicable *Chicanery* to destroy his Neighbour's good Name, 'tis fit his Mistakes should

should be laid open, his wrong Conclusions exposed, to prevent the Mischief they might otherwise do.

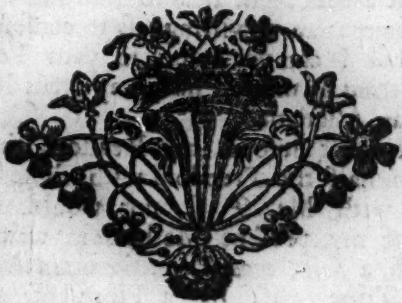
Controversy, Sir, is not my *Choice*; but whilst I find, under the plausible Pretext of *standing up for the Faith*, Encroachments made on our blessed LORD's Authority over Conscience (who is *sole* Head and King in his Church) the Foundations of the PROTESTANT Religion undermined; SINCERITY made light of; and all *well-grounded* Expectations of future Happiness entirely removed from the *greatest Saints on Earth*; as these are Things of the vastest Consequence, so, if you think fit to prosecute the present Debate, my best Services shall attend you, who still am,

REVEREND SIR,

Your affectionate

humble Servant,

M. T.



A.



A

LETTER

To Mr. P. C. from Mr. Nation.

Reverend Sir,

IN your Letter to me, added to that to the Vindicator of my Sermon, I find you have inserted a Certificate, and said somewhat farther to confront the Facts in mine. By this you have made it necessary I should say somewhat in my own Vindication; and had you not done this, I might have made you no Reply at all. You have represented me, in your first Letter to me, and in that to the *Vindicator*, as a *Man of Strife, a Sower of Discord*: But it happens, that you have been forc'd to prove it from my *secret Intentions* (which no doubt you must be entirely acquainted with) rather than from any thing I have said. And whether *my Sermon* is most calculated for Peace, or *your Letters*, is left to other Judges to determine. But that you are not so great a Friend to Peace, as you would represent your self, must appear, when I acquaint my Readers, that, about four Months since, I sent a private Letter to a Friend of yours, the Contents of which you can be no Stranger to, unless you would not condescend to read or hear it. In this Letter, I desir'd there might be nothing said in denial of the Facts I had advanced; for whoever the Persons intended were,

were, there was such Proof to be produced, that I was sensible it would be their prudent Part to be silent; and I apprehended the contrary would bring in a Reply, and widen Differences, which would be far from being agreeable to me.

I also desired, that whatever had given, or might give Offence in the present Dispute, might be dropt; that whoever did write again, would keep to the *real Controversy* between you and some of your Brethren; viz. whether a Person may differ from the commonly receiv'd Doctrine of the Trinity, and yet be a *sincere* and *good* Man; that this Argument might be handled with a Christian Temper, so as might be for the Service of Truth, and the Credit of Religion; but in neither of these Requests could I be heard. You still go on in your *old Way*, and, for any Thing I can see, are more for *inflaming* People's *Passions*, than for *informing* their *Judgments*; for lengthening out *uncharitable* Disputes, than for promoting *Christian Love and Peace*. Besides what you have produc'd in denial of Facts, in your Letter to the *Vindicator*, you have given a lame Account of Sincerity; for surely it takes in a sincere Endeavour to know the Will of God, as well as to do it; and, one would think, a Person of your superior Abilities should have been sensible of it. 'Tis, indeed, just such another Account as you have given^a of practical Christianity, when you call it *moral Virtue, Sobriety*; and tell us, Mr. *Hobbs, Spinoza, Parsons the Jesuit*, and others were virtuous and sober Persons, as *Arians* and *Socinians* may be. If you do not mean *Practical Christianity* hereby, you only impose on your Readers, (for you are writing against my Sermon, in which I have given a large Account of *Practical Christianity*, and I must think have justly infer'd, that they who *so practise* are, *in the Main*, sound in the Faith, and ought to be treated and received as Christians). And if you do mean *Practical Christianity* by those Terms, and such as all the above Gentlemen might be famous for, I think you have sufficiently expos'd your self. You have farther, in your Letter to the *Vindicator*, enlarg'd on your Controversy with those call'd *Arians*, to help you at a dead Lift; but it can do you little Service, unless it be with the *Vulgar*, and those

^a Letter to Mr. *Nation*, in Vindication of the Assembly, page 36, 37.

who know nothing of Controversy ; and for such (to give you your Due) your Writings are admirably calculated. Should you not have put the Argument between the Orthodox and the *Arians* in a fairer Light ? Surely (as you have stated the Account,) the Latter appear to be some of the greatest *Ideots* that ever were, or rather to be given up, in Judgment, to blindness of Mind ; which, if it be agreeable to your Charity, I own is not to mine. I am no more in *their Scheme* than your self ; but I would that all Men should have Justice done them, and I am sure no good Cause can suffer by it, though it may by the contrary. See with what Fairness the many learned Gentlemen, that have wrote against the *Deists*, manage. By this they have set all other Christian Writers a noble Example.

Your Last to me you begin thus ; ^a “ I have carefully perus’d your Letter,” and of this you soon give an extraordinary Instance, “ and am glad to find you professing your Faith in the Terms you do ; but may not what follows deserve your Recollection, that you never said any Thing you now assert, publicly or privately, in all your Life ? ” I cannot tell how carefully you have perused the rest of my Letter, but you must not blame me, when I say, that here seems to be a great Oversight ; for my Words are ^b, that *I had never said any Thing contrary to what I had asserted, &c.*

You say ^c, “ as to your direct Charges of *Arianism* on you, you can find none in my Defense.” But, Sir, are there not gross *Insinuations* to this Purpose ? I would, to refresh your Memory, mention a few of them ^d. “ The Purport of the latter Part of your Sermon, as well as the Beginning, is to recommend nothing, besides holy Living ; at the same time throwing up the Faith, with respect to the Deity of Christ, and the holy Spirit, without one Struggle for it.” ^e “ Certainly, this way of proceeding, must be intended highly in Favour of *Socinians, Arians, Pelagians, &c.*” ^f “ How unaccountable is it, that you who have not yet openly re-

^a Letter added to that to the *Vindicator*, p. 68. ^b Letter to the *Vindicator*, annexed to his to Mr. P. C. p. 49. ^c Letter added to that to the *Vindicator*, p. 68. ^d Letter to Mr. Nation, in defense of the Assembly, p. 22. ^e Page 24. ^f Page 25, misprinted.

"nounced your Agreement with your Brethren, in the Faith they profess, &c." ^a "But considering what you still profess your Faith to be, it would have been more consistent." ^b "If your Faith be the same that once it was, &c." Not to mention any more Particulars, your Letter appears to be one *popular Harangue*, to bring me into Suspicion of *Heresy*: And as your Letter is to me, your Reflections are *Personal*. Now, Sir, according to your *own* way of arguing, ^c "*Innuendoes* are frequently as great Reflections on Persons, as any direct Personal Charges." You tell me ^d, "my publick Address to the Ministers amounts to a Charge." If so, I will leave it to the World to judge, whether all you have said does not amount to a Charge of *Arianism* on me. You may, after all, say, you intended no such thing; but I would advise you, for the future, to express your self with more Caution, otherwise you may not be so easily credited, as you may imagine.

I might add, that a *certain Person* hath busily enquir'd whether I was not the Author of a late Pamphlet ^e, (which, by the way, is not so very consistent with his representing me, on all Occasions, as a Person who can't write common Sense;) though, whoever the Author is, he may not so easily, as he may think, prove him an *Arian*, from that Pamphlet.

You say ^f, "As to God's making all Allowances for the Errors of Mens Understandings, enough is said in answer to your *Vindication*." My Expression is, *The mere Errors of Mens Understandings*; and as to *these*, I cannot see you have said any thing. It does not appear, that you apprehend what they are. I would not, therefore, have you be offended at my informing you, that they are *involuntary Errors*; such as there may be, where is yet an honest Mind, a sincere Desire to know and do the Mind and Will of God.

I come now to the Facts in my Letter. The stating of them at large, and setting forth the Evidence for them, is what I can, with truth, say, I should gladly have been excused from. I would not willingly have done what

^a Page 54. ^b Page 57. ^c Page 30. ^d Ibid. ^e A Dissertation on the Nature of Heresy, by a Lover of Truth and Peace. ^f Letter added to that to the *Vindicator*, p. 68. ^g Letter to the *Vindicator*, p. 57.

might touch my Brethren in so tender a Part, or be any way prejudicial to them. I had not mention'd the Facts *at first*, but I thought it the only Argument which might avail to end our unhappy Disputes. I could not believe they would have been publickly deny'd. Could I have foreseen this, I believe I should have refrain'd the Publication of them. By the private Letter I have already mention'd, the Reader must see I have done all I could, to prevent any thing being said in denial of them. I laid my self under an Obligation in my *last*, if they were deny'd, to mention Names; *i. e.* to tell who the Persons were, that were admitted to, or suffer'd in Communion; and who they that so admitted or suffer'd them. Here's a Certificate publish'd in denial of the Facts, which is as follows.

“ **W** H E R E A S it has been suggested, that We,
 “ whose Names are under-written, are the Persons
 “ meant by Mr. N. to have received into our Communion
 “ *Arians*, and those that are in Dr. *Clarke's* Scheme.
 “ If by these Terms are meant, such as have denied the
 “ true and proper Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost,
 “ We certify to all Mankind, that to our Knowledge, We
 “ never received to Communion, any that were of such
 “ erroneous Principles; that is, any Persons whom We
 “ knew to have denied the true or proper Divinity of the
 “ Son and Holy Ghost, or that asserted them to be Crea-
 “ tures, being greatly concern'd for the important Truths
 “ of the Gospel, now call'd in Question.

“ However, at the same time, out of due Regard to
 “ tender Consciences, and to Love and Peace, We have
 “ not been willing to eject out of our Communion, any
 “ Christians, that have been under some Doubts, in Re-
 “ spect to any nice or critical Explications of this *high*
 “ *Mystery* of the Christian Religion.

John Ball,
John Walrond,
John Lavington,

I can't but say, that two of the Persons who have sign'd this Certificate are those concern'd as to the two first Facts. And as to the latter, Mr. P. C. tells me he has talk'd

with the Persons, who seem to be pointed at, and they know of none such, who were in Communion with the *Orthodox* and the *Arians* at the same time; and he hopes I can produce no such Instances. So that I am obliged, in my own necessary Vindication, to prove the Facts I have spoken of. Charity must begin at home; and though I would readily do any thing reasonable, for the Service of others, yet I can't say I am for complimenting them, to the Prejudice of my own Reputation.

The first Person, who, I have said, "was one well known in the learned World, a Man of too much Simplicity, to conceal his Sentiments, that was in Dr. Clarke's Scheme, and in Communion with an *orthodox* Divine," is the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Jeffery*, sometime since deceased, a Gentleman of vast Learning for his Age, one of uncommon Piety, and of the greatest Simplicity. I make no doubt, he is now in the bright and peaceable Regions above. I well knew him my self, and can say, he was very free in declaring his Sentiments, not only to me, but when others were present; and 'tis much, if he should not be so with the Reverend Mr. *John Ball* of *Honiton*, who is the Person he was in Communion with. But that he was thus free with him, and that Mr. *Ball* knew his Sentiments, must chiefly be proved, from what he himself said to others. 'Tis not likely he would so contradict himself, and the Course of his exemplary Life, as to say what was false, especially in a Case where he could have no Temptation to do it.

He told Mr. *John Stokes*, a neighbouring Gentleman of Reputation (who has given me leave to insert his Name) that the Design of his being sent to Mr. *Ball's*, was to be cur'd of his being in Dr. *Clarke's* Sentiments concerning the Trinity; and I have, my self, heard it said, by many in this City, that this was the Design of his being sent thither. Now it is not a very common thing for a Person, under a Distemper, to be sent to a *Physician* to be cur'd, and the *Physician* know not what he is sent to him for, nor what the Distemper is he labours under; especially if the Patient be with him some considerable Time.

But for farther Proof, I have Liberty from the Rev. Mr. *Anthony Atkey*, of *Shepton Mallet* (one whose Cha-

* Letter to the *Vindicator*, p. 56.

racter can speak for him, that he may well be credited) to use his Name, and to assure the World, that Mr. *Thomas Jeffery* has frequently told him, that on his Removal from *Exeter* to *Honiton*, he was, without any Difficulty, admitted to join in Communion with that Society, to which Mr. *Ball* was Pastor; and that he *as often* told him, that Mr. *Ball* knew him, at that time, to be in Dr. *Clarke's* Sentiments concerning the Trinity, and endeavour'd, by Conversation, to bring him back to the common Doctrine.

There are several in this *City*, who can testify of this Matter.

One particularly heard Mr. *Jeffery* say, he was on a Saturday Evening, before the Sacrament, very free and open with Mr. *Ball*. The Dispute ran so high, that he said to him, Cousin *Ball*, Shall I come to the Lord's Table to Morrow? Mr. *Ball* answered, by all Means.

Another can testify much to the same Purpose. These Persons are not willing, for some particular Reasons, to insert their Names; yet I am allow'd to say, they are ready to go to any of the Ministers in this *City*, and testify according to what I have said; and if they desire it of me, I will acquaint them with it, and make no doubt but they will be as good as their Word.

There are more who will certify, as to this Fact, if what I have said is not sufficient; though I should think it is.

The other Person, who I have said^a, has been very frank in declaring his Sentiments, and was in Communion with one of those *Orthodox* Divines (who refus'd to give Thanks for my Sermon) and never refus'd, is Mr. *Andrew Jeffery*. He was in Communion at *Ottery St. Mary*, with the Reverend Mr. *John Walrond*. This Gentleman I have had Occasion to be acquainted with, and have found him a Person of Probity and Integrity; and this is the Character I have heard many others give of him. And, I should think, Mr. *Walrond* himself must believe him to be so, otherwise he would not have continued him in Communion so many Years as he did; and till the said Mr. *Jeffery* left the Country, and came into this *City* to live. If a Man has not common Honesty, he is not a good *Heathen*, much less a good *Christian*;

^a Letter to the *Vindicator*, p. 57.

or a Person to be received to Christian Communion? Now this Gentleman has been known to be very free in declaring his Sentiments. He declares (and has often declared to me) that he has been, many a time, very free with Mr. *Walrond*, as to his being in Dr. *Clark's* Sentiments; and I don't know what he could say more to convince him he was in them, than he has told me he has said.

I have also been very credibly inform'd, that when one Mr. *Kern* of *Ottery*, a Person of Integrity, ask'd Mr. *Walrond* how he could baptize Mr. *Jeffery's* Child, he should say, he did it on the Faith of his Wife; and, if so, it shew'd he had not a very good Opinion of *his* Faith. And I beg leave to ask Mr. *Walrond* one farther Question, Whether, during this same Time, he received him to the Lord's Supper also on the Faith of his Wife? But, if he received him to the Lord's Supper on his own Faith, why was not his Child received on the same?

Thus have I produced the Evidence for the two first Facts. How far the Ministers spoken of might have forgotten Things, or misapprehended them, I can't say.

As to the last Fact^a, of Persons in this *City* being in Communion with the *Orthodox* and *Arians* at the same Time, and that for many Years, and who had never a Word said to them, as they tell me: I must confess what is said in denial of this, did, most of all, startle me. For here the Question is not, whether they were in Dr. *Clark's* Scheme, or the *Orthodox* Ministers knew them to be so, but whether they were, as I had said, in *different Communion*s at the same Time? It is not answer'd that the *Orthodox* Ministers did not *all* administer to them, which might have been said, but that they don't know of *any such* Persons who were so in Communion, and, 'tis hop'd, I can't produce any such Instances.

How far faulty Mr. *P. C.* has been, in not examining the Ministers of this *City* about this Fact, I can't say; but, I will say, the Fact it self is notorious.

The Persons thus in different Communion, for many Years, are Mrs. *White*, and her eldest Daughter, now Mrs. *Haller*, both living in this *City*.

The Occasion of their thus being in different Communion, was as follows.

^a Letter to the *Vindicator*, p. 57.

When Mr. *Peirce*, and Mr. *Hallet*, Sen. were turn'd out, they thought those who succeeded them had no Right to do so ; wherefore they would not receive of them, and, indeed, they would receive only of the Reverend and Learned Mr. *Withers*, some Time since deceas'd. Now there being a Meeting here, called the little Meeting, which the four *Orthodox* Ministers equally took Care of, Mr. *Withers*, Mr. *Furse*, (and, after him, Mr. *Green*) Mr. *Lavington*, and Mr. *Enty* ; it came to Mr. *Withers*'s Turn to administer but once in four Months ; so, three times in four, they communicated with Mr. *Peirce*, and, after him, with Mr. *Hallet*, Jun: and thus it was for five or six Years. This many of the Communicants living cannot but know, and be able to testify : And those Gentlemen say, the *Orthodox* Ministers never said any Thing to them about their Communion with those called *Arians* ; which, surely, one would think, they should have done, had they believed them to be *Idolaters*. Should they not have told them they ought not with such to eat ? To say they did not administer to them, is to say nothing, (for they had not the Opportunity of doing it) they suffer'd them in their Society, and in Communion with those to whom they did administer ; whereas they should have warned them not to be Partakers with *Idolaters* ; and, if they would not have taken Warning, they should have rejected them.

Having thus supported the Facts in my Letter, I would now take the Liberty of making a few Remarks on the Certificate you have inserted ^a.

It might be of *your own* drawing up (for it is entirely of a Piece with what follows it) and, if so, I would advise you not to fall so foul again, as you have, on Dr. *Clark* (telling of his *abominable Sakvo*, so destructive to Faith and common Honesty, as well as Non-Conformity :) If you do, one or other may go so far as to make a second Application of that to you,

Turpe est Doctori, cum culpa redarguit ipsum.

I must say, here are too many *Misrepresentations*, *Sakvoes*, and *Evasions*, which are not very conformable to Christian Simplicity.

^a Letter to Mr. *Nation* added to that to the *Vindicator*, p. 69.

“ Whereas

"Whereas it has been suggested, that we, whose Names are under-written, are the Persons meant by Mr. N. to have received into our Communion," &c. Now, if they fell into Dr. Clark's Scheme after they were in Communion, and yet were continued, 'tis equal to their having been first admitted or received, being known to be such *Hereticks*. They had forfeited their Right, and therefore should have been rejected. I apprehend, this may be one *Evasion*, because I have heard it urged before now; besides, one of the Persons was admitted in Dr. Clark's Scheme.

It follows "to have received *Arians*, and those that are in Dr. Clark's Scheme. If by these Terms are meant such as have denied the true and proper Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, we certify to all Mankind, that, to our Knowledge, we never received to Communion any that were of such erroneous Principles; that is, any Persons whom we knew to have denied the true or proper Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, or that asserted them to be Creatures," &c.

The plain Meaning of which is: If the *Arian* Principles, and Dr. Clark's, be such as they never were, and they have asserted what they never have asserted; then we certify to all Mankind, we never received any of such erroneous Principles.

Sir, those called *Arians* say, they believe the true and proper Divinity of the Son of God; and whether you know it, or not, I can't say, but I know, they judge they are very unjustly dealt with, to be branded with the Name of *Arians*, when they disown the *distinguishing Notions* of *Arius*, viz. that Christ is a Creature, that there was a Time when he was not. And if this they say for themselves be true, I think, those, who have branded them as *Arians*, have much to answer for it. And I would ask you, where have those, called *Arians*, asserted the Son of God to be a *Creature*? produce an Instance, if you can. I ask you, whether Dr. Clark has, any where, said so? You may say, he says what is *equivalent* to it, 'tis a just Consequence of his Scheme: But really, Sir, I do not know what right you have to fasten Consequences on other Men, which they *disown*, or to explain their Schemes farther, than they have explained them themselves.

But least the above should not serve the Turn, and it should be proved Persons had declared so and so, 'tis added,

ed, " However, at the same Time, out of due Regard to
 " tender Consciences (*and, I hope, all the Persons I have*
 " *mentioned were of this Number*) and to Love and
 " Peace, we have not been willing to eject out of our
 " Communion any Christians, that have been under
 " some Doubts (*and 'tis much if they should*) in respect
 " to any nice or critical Explication of this high Mystery
 " of the Christian Religion."

Having remark'd on the Certificate, I must say, I should
 much better like one express'd thus: " We never admit-
 " ted into Communion, or suffer'd in Communion, any
 " that we knew to be *Arians*, or in Dr. Clark's Scheme;
 " that is, any who denied the Equality of the Son with the
 " Father, and the Trinity in Unity. These Things, 'tis
 " certain, those called *Arians* do deny, and so did Dr. Clark.
 " But it may be said, this is not sufficient: It may be said
 " so. But, Sir, If you will please to allow me, that a Per-
 " son, who does either of these may yet be fit for Christian
 " Communion, I will undertake to prove, that the Contro-
 " versy about Communion with *Arians* must fall to the
 " Ground, and that about *Heresy* and *Idolatry* too.

Immediately after the Certificate, you go on^a, " As to
 " that Meeting, that is equally under the Care of the four
 " orthodox Ministers, as you seem, in Derision, to stile them;"
 " there is no Derision express'd (*I suppose, you saw me*
 " *sneer, when I wrote it, just as you know my secret Inten-*
 " *tions*) " I am told by some of them, who seem particu-
 " larly to be pointed at (*I hope, you did not put the Que-*
 " *stion to them about this Matter very strictly*) that they
 " knew of no such Persons, who were in Communion with
 " the *Orthodox* and *Arians* at the same Time." Now by
 " this may be meant, that they don't know those of the *New*
 " *Meeting* here are *Arians*, and, if so, how is it there
 " have been such loud Clamours about *Arianism*, *Idolatry*,
 " &c. or that these Persons did not communicate at both
 " Places the *same Day*, and 'tis strange if they should.
 " If you know who the Persons are, as you say you do;
 " if you'll be so kind as to produce your Instances, which,
 " I hope, you can't, (*I doubt, there was much Fear mix'd*
 " *with your Hope*) you'll find the Ministers you gird up-
 " on have Courage enough to act a consistent Part."

^a Letter added to that to the *Vindicator*, p. 69.

Now here 'tis intimated, if the Fact be true, they don't know it. And yet this is very strange, it being of so long standing. However, I am sure, it can't be the Case with *one*, who must easily recollect Time and Place where I mentioned the Persons to him, who were thus in Communion; and, in a private Letter lately, I hinted at the same.

"I shall find they have Courage enough to act a consistent Part."

I suppose they will readily excommunicate them, when they have left them some Years since.

Having thus (as you think) obviated the Facts in my Letter, you go on as to the Argument of putting the Test to the Communicants. And you are pleased to say ^a, according to my own Expression, "It deserves to be pass'd over with a slight." I must own, 'tis a great Temptation to a Person thus to pass over an Argument, when otherwise, if it should be too hard for him, he can by no means like the Consequences. However, Sir, 'tis *you* say it deserves to be pass'd over with a slight. I said ^b, it was not to be answer'd; and I say still, that 'tis not be answer'd by those who run so very high in their Sentiments, and have been so much for imposing Tests on those, whose *Declarations*, or *Actions*, have never proved them to be Idolaters. As weak as my Argument is, to evade it, you are forced to fly to an Argument, which is, indeed, just in it self; but then you condemn your self by it.

You, as a Friend, advise me, on a particular Occasion ^c, "to be contented with what is past:" I would return your Compliment, and, as a Friend, advise you to be contented with what is past; for really your going on will not make Things better.

It happens that, at this Time, you are out in your Politicks. You have meddled in a wrong Cause. Indeed, you are pleased to say, as to my Sermon ^d, "That I have discover'd much Weakness and Vanity throughout the Performance." But, Sir, whatever may be your Thoughts, you may depend on it, I have got more Credit by it, than

^a Letter to me added to that to the *Vindicator*, p. 70.

^b Letter to the *Vindicator*, p. 57.

^c Letter to me added to that to the *Vindicator*, p. 68.

^d Letter to me in Vindication of the Assembly, p. 40.

ever you will get by writing against it. I can tell you (excepting a few weak Persons, whom you can impose on) the World wonders what you are making such a Noise about. They can see no such Treason in the Sermon; but think 'tis a plain, honest, practical Discourse. This is the Opinion of many of the *Church of England*, as well as *Dissenters*, and of many of the Ministers of both.

You have also to do with the *wrong Persons*; such as have no very terrible Apprehensions either of your Displeasure, or Abilities, and with whom your chief Argument fails you; I mean, being able to call them *Arians*, *Idolaters*, &c. (though I won't say but you have shown your good Inclinations to it) and your other Arguments are weak and insufficient.

If, notwithstanding my Advice, you will take the Field again, I desire you will not forget to publish a Certificate, drawn up with your own Hand, and signed by a *Brother Author* of yours, who has lately received into Communion Persons who had been several Years in Communion with Mr. Hallet, Jun. and been so out of Choice; whom, I am ~~am~~ credibly inform'd, he admitted, without putting any Question to them.

I must now own, I have made very free with you, and you may complain of me, that I have not treated you with Deference and Respect; but, I promise you, I will do it, when you write with more Humility, Temper, and Fairness.

If you please to put your Name, I may be the more liberal of my Encomiums, and you will let the World see, you are not ashamed to own who you are. This is all, at present, from,

Your Friend,

and Servant,

WILLIAM NATION.